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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

10th plenary meeting
Saturday, 17 September 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by The Honourable Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Honourable Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations Her Excellency The Honourable Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, and to invite her to address the Assembly.

President Kumaratunga: I extend to you, Sir, our warmest congratulations as you assume the high office of the President of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We wish you all the best and assure you of Sri Lanka's support and cooperation in your work. I convey gratitude to Mr. Jean Ping for his astute leadership of the fifty-ninth session.

This sixtieth landmark session of the General Assembly is doubly significant for Sri Lanka, as this year we mark the fiftieth anniversary of our membership in the United Nations. As a small nation that has kept the flame of democracy burning through many tribulations, we take modest pride in the fact that what we said at the first session of the General Assembly we addressed can still be recalled with undiminished relevance. Prime Minister Bandaranaike, representing Sri Lanka, said on that occasion:

> "This is an Organization which expresses itself most effectively by bringing to bear a certain moral force — the collective moral force and decency of human beings. That is a task in which the weak as well as the strong can render a useful service, and I give the Assembly the assurance, on behalf of my country, that as far as we are concerned, every endeavour that we can make in all sincerity to assist in the achievements of those noble ideals for which this Organization stands will always be forthcoming in the fullest measure." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Eleventh Session, Plenary Meetings, 590th meeting, para. 42*)

Five decades on, I have the pleasure to say that my country has kept that promise by regularly contributing to consensus-building in the Organization in areas ranging from the law of the sea to disarmament and from human rights to the issue of terrorism. We remain fully committed to the United Nations.

We continue to believe that the collective moral force of this Organization is indispensable for a secure, peaceful and humane world. We are convinced that such a world can be realized through the honest commitment of every Member State to its individual

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and collective responsibilities. Our peoples live in the hope and expectation that we shall deliver.

On the morning of 26 December 2004, Sri Lanka and several other countries around the Indian Ocean region woke up to a natural disaster of unprecedented magnitude. Towering tsunami waves struck two thirds of the coastal areas of our island nation, leaving in its wake death and destruction on a scale hitherto unknown by the world. Moved by the enormous scale of that calamity, Governments, the United Nations and other international organizations, civil society organizations and countless well-wishers across the world rushed to help my country and its people to recover, rehabilitate and rebuild. It was a magnificent gesture of human solidarity. Citizens of the world reached out beyond the confines of geopolitical and other man-made barriers in one magnificent gesture of human generosity. That rekindled in us new confidence in the power of peoples acting in unison across the world to move Governments to act in the best interests of humankind for a new and better world.

On behalf of my people and my Government, I wish to convey my profound appreciation and gratitude to all those who assisted and sympathized with us and contributed generously to rebuild our country. Let me take this opportunity to extend a special word of thanks to President Clinton, the United Nations Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery, for his commitment and leadership in coordinating the ongoing international effort for sustainable recovery.

Just as my country was in national distress in the aftermath of the tsunami disaster, we are now in distress in the face of an ominous renewal of terror on our soil. One month ago, my dear colleague Lakshman Kadirgamar, the Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka, was assassinated by a calculated and barbaric act of terrorism. One more hero who fought relentlessly for freedom and justice has been felled by the enemies of peace and unity. As Foreign Minister, the late Mr. Kadirgamar argued powerfully and worked tirelessly against extremist racist ideologies that employ violence to gain their divisive objectives. He was bold enough to expose to the world the true face of terrorism inflicted upon my country. For 11 long years, from this very podium, Mr. Kadirgamar warned the Assembly about the threat posed by terrorism to the democratic way of life, not only in Sri Lanka but across the world.

For over two decades, Sri Lanka has been under sustained assault by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed group that employs brutal methods and suicide bombings in its campaign of terror to obtain a separate State. Disregarding the implementation of the ceasefire agreement, that group continues to engage in numerous illegal and terrorist activities. Those include the conscription of children as soldiers — in callous disregard for promises given to many, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict — and the assassination of democratic opponents, as part of their policy of eliminating Tamil political leaders and human rights activists, with disdain for all international law and practice and despite sustained efforts by my Government and Norwegian facilitators.

I tend to doubt that the Security Council's recent identification of that group in connection with child conscription would suffice to deter such activities. Targeted sanctions such as those proposed by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his report to the Security Council should be imposed on those armed groups that undermine national and international peace and violate human rights.

I firmly believe that terrorism cannot be eliminated through military suppression by State machinery. The socio-economic and cultural roots of a conflict must be sought and effectively redressed. We recognize that a lasting solution to ethnic issues and to terrorism in my country, or anywhere else, can only be found through negotiation and dialogue. Accordingly, my Government was the first, in 1994, to offer a negotiated settlement in place of an armed conflict, as well as an extensive devolution of power instead of a separate State. In February 2002, the Government entered into a ceasefire agreement with the rebel group and began talks, with the facilitation of the Government of Norway.

However, two and a half years ago, the LTTE walked away from the peace talks for the sixth time in 18 years. All efforts to have the talks renewed have so far failed. As a measure of good will after the tsunami disaster struck us, I agreed to an arrangement with the rebels for joint action in tsunami reconstruction work. That was yet another measure in a long series of efforts to engage and work with the rebels, particularly in humanitarian ventures, despite their obdurate insistence to remain armed and remain uncontested by any other democratic Tamil political party.

My Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the ceasefire and the peace talks. We continue to do all that is required by a democratic Government to ensure that we do not return to armed conflict, fulfilling the wishes of all our people.

A peace process cannot, and does not, operate in a vacuum. People demand that a process of peace should include the commitment and good conduct of all parties to a conflict. When a belligerent group — a non-State actor — exploits the unique position offered to it by a peace process to utilize the freedom guaranteed under a democratic system of governance to strengthen itself through infiltration and the coercion of civilians, organizations and political parties, that impinges seriously on the ability of an elected Government to move forward effectively in its efforts at reconciliation and peace.

The restoration of democracy, the creation of space for dissent and the promotion of human rights in the affected areas in the north and the east of our country are now essential prerequisites for a successful and meaningful peace process in Sri Lanka. A lasting political solution can come to fruition only when the rebel group becomes a democratic civilian organization. That deserves the fullest support of the international community.

As we have been for many long years, Sri Lanka remains firmly committed to the global endeavour to fight terrorism in all its aspects. No cause justifies the indiscriminate unleashing of terror upon the innocent. Sri Lanka has accordingly signed and ratified all United Nations conventions aimed at combating terrorism. We earnestly hope that at this session it will be possible to conclude work on the comprehensive convention on international terrorism, in order to complete and strengthen the international legal framework to combat terrorism through collective measures. Sri Lanka will continue to provide its contribution to facilitate a consensus in its capacity as Chair of the United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on this subject.

Sri Lanka has pledged to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015. We have already achieved the targeted goals in primary education and in infant and maternal mortality. We are committed to further promoting the political and economic empowerment of women so that gender equality becomes a matter of human rights and social justice.

Our National Child Protection Authority implements many programmes to eliminate abuse and violence against children and to ensure their protection as well as their right to freely enjoy life's most precious gift, childhood. Our success is due to the outcome of sustained efforts in policy planning and implementation.

Those benchmarks and other indicators manifesting the high physical quality of life enjoyed by our people will be further elevated as we strive to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. However, poverty remains a major challenge for us. To eradicate this scourge, we are now taking further steps through the adoption of economic and social programmes, in cooperation with our bilateral and multilateral development partners.

If we look at the current world health situation, although smallpox has been eradicated and polio is on the verge of being eliminated, there are other diseases — often associated with poverty — that continue to take a heavy human toll, especially in developing countries. Every year, 6 million children die from malnutrition before their fifth birthday. More than 50 per cent of people in Africa suffer from water-related diseases such as cholera. HIV/AIDS kills 6,000 people every day. Each year, more than 300 million people are infected with malaria. New challenges, such as severe acute respiratory syndrome and avian influenza, indicate that national borders offer little protection against such proliferating pandemics. In the face of unparalleled advances, both in technology and in human mobility, it is unconscionable to let some in our nations suffer from diseases that can be controlled, if not eliminated.

In my view, there are three evils plaguing our world today that can have no place in the modern globalizing era of the twenty-first century: poverty, disease and terrorism. Today, these evils affect the social, cultural and economic well-being of a majority of humankind. No country can deal with them on its own. International cooperation is in our self-interest and needs to be mustered. We share the strong belief that the United Nations, on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary, should seriously undertake comprehensive reforms so that the Organization is fully equipped to

meet new challenges, taking into account the current global realities.

We acknowledge with appreciation the valuable contribution made by the Secretary-General and his team to the ongoing reform process, which made possible the adoption of the outcome document (resolution 60/1) at the recent summit of the Organization. We urge all Member States to work together to build on that framework in order to operationalize what has been agreed and to work further on what remains to be achieved.

Recovery after the tsunami disaster taught us the value and potential of humanity acting in unison when fellow human beings are in distress. We now hope that the same human spirit and common interests will continue to prevail in addressing the socio-economic and security challenges we face. Let us resolve to commit ourselves collectively, on this solemn occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the Organization, to act together in the interest of humankind in order that we may strive to eliminate the three scourges of poverty, disease and terrorism.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for the statement she has just made.

Ms. Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

The President: Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like briefly to draw the attention of members to matters concerning the maintenance of order in the General Assembly Hall. There have been several instances of cellular telephones ringing in the Hall while the meeting has been in progress. That interferes, as members have noticed, with the orderly proceedings of the meeting. I therefore strongly urge members to turn off their cellular telephones or to keep them in silent mode while they are in the General Assembly Hall. I also request that representatives move quietly through the aisles as they enter and exit the Hall so as not to disturb the representative who has the floor and that they keep conversations to the level of a whisper. I rely on all those present to cooperate in maintaining order and quiet in the Hall, not least in respect for our speakers.

Address by Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ahmadinejad (*spoke in Farsi; English text provided by the delegation*): Today, we have gathered here to exchange views about the world, its future and our common responsibilities towards it. It is obvious that the future of the world is intertwined with its current state and with the prevailing trends, which exhibit signs of hope and despair.

On the one hand, certain hopes and opportunities exist, and the General Assembly is convened on the basis of those hopes. Today, human thought reflects significant commonalities that provide an appropriate foundation upon which to build. With the passing of the era of agnostic philosophies, humanity is once again united in celebrating monotheism and belief in the Creator as the originator of existence. That is the common thread that binds us all together. Faith will prove to be the solution to many of today's problems. The truth will shine the light of faith and ethics on the lives of human beings; it will prevent them from engaging in aggression, coercion and injustice; and it will guide them towards care and compassion for fellow beings.

Another hope is found in the common global appreciation of the sources of knowledge. Although reason, experience and science are among the valuable sources of knowledge, the darkness of the Middle Ages prevented major portions of the Western world from appreciating them. This reactionary tendency deprived many of access to various scientific findings and knowledge and led to the exclusion of other sources of knowledge, namely God and knowledge based on revelation from the life of human beings in the West — divine knowledge that was disseminated by such prophets as Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and

Mohammad. Today, agnostic thinking is on the decline and humanity is equally enamoured of religion, science, knowledge and spirituality. This is an auspicious beginning.

Divine prophets teach us about proper regard for the exalted state of human beings on earth. The human being is blessed with dignity, manifested most importantly in being the viceroy of the Almighty on earth. The Almighty placed humans on earth to develop it, to institutionalize justice, to overcome their egoistic tendencies and to praise no lord but the Almighty. Faith and good deeds can bring deliverance and the good life, even in this world. Attaining this depend on human will, that is, the will of each and every one of us. We must heed the call of our common primordial nature and achieve the realization of this good life.

On the other hand, the prevalence of military domination; increasing poverty; the growing gap between rich and poor countries; violence as a means to resolve crises; the spread of terrorism, especially State terrorism; the existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; the pervasive lack of honesty in inter-State relations; and disregard for the equal rights of peoples and nations in international relations constitute some of the challenges and threats facing us.

Although these challenges are very real, we believe we are not predestined to experience them. Our common will not only can change this course but, in fact, can lead us to a life filled with hope and prosperity. Divine revelation teaches us that

> "The Almighty changes the fate of no people unless they themselves show a will for change" (*The Holy Koran, XIII:11*).

How can we influence the future of the world? When and how will peace, tranquillity and well-being for all come about? These are the fundamental questions before us.

We believe that a sustainable order — in which peace and tranquillity can flourish — can be realized only on the basis of the two pillars of justice and spirituality. The more human society departs from justice and spirituality, the greater the insecurity it will face, so much so that a relatively small crisis — such as a natural disaster — can lead to various aberrations and inhumane behaviour.

Unfortunately, the world is rife with discrimination and poverty. Discrimination produces hatred, war and terrorism. They all share the common root of a lack of spirituality coupled with injustice.

Justice is about equal rights; the equitable distribution of resources in the territories of different States; the equality of all before the law; and respect for international agreements. Justice recognizes the right of all to tranquillity, peace and a dignified life. Justice rejects intimidation and double standards. As the eminent daughter of the Prophet of Islam said, "Justice brings tranquillity to our hearts."

Today, the world longs for the establishment of such justice. If humanity heeds the call of its primordial nature with firm resolve, justice will follow. That is what the Almighty has promised and what all people of goodwill from all religions are waiting for. If the prevailing discourse of global relations becomes one of justice and spirituality, then durable peace will be guaranteed.

Conversely, if international relations are defined without justice or spirituality and are void of moral considerations, then mechanisms for promoting confidence and peace will remain insufficient and ineffective.

If some, relying on their superior military and economic might, attempt to expand their rights and privileges, they will be performing a great disservice to the cause of peace and, in fact, will fuel the arms race and spread insecurity, fear and deception. If global trends continue to serve the interests of small, influential groups, even the interests of the citizens of powerful countries will be jeopardized, as was seen during recent crises and natural disasters such as the recent tragedy of Hurricane Katrina.

Today my nation calls on other nations and Governments to move forward towards a durable tranquillity and peace based on justice and spirituality.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was born of a movement based on the pure, primordial nature of a people who rose up to regain their dignity, esteem and human rights. The Islamic revolution toppled a regime which had been put in place through a coup and that was being supported by those who claim to be advocates of democracy and human rights. For 25 years they thwarted the aspirations of the nation to development and progress through the intimidation and

torture of the population and submission and subservience to outsiders.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is the manifestation of true democracy in the region. The discourse of the Iranian nation is focused on respect for the rights of human beings and on a quest for tranquillity, peace, justice and development for all through monotheism.

For eight years, Saddam's regime imposed a massive war of aggression and occupation on my people. It employed the most heinous weapons of mass destruction — including chemical weapons — against Iranians and Iraqis alike. But who, in fact, armed Saddam with those weapons? What was the reaction of those who now claim to fight against weapons of mass destruction to the use of chemical weapons back then? The world is witness to the fact that the Islamic Republic of Iran, because of its humanitarian principles — even during the most trying of times and when it was sustaining the highest number of casualties — never allowed itself to use such weapons. Thousands of nuclear warheads stockpiled in various locations, coupled with programmes to further develop these inhuman weapons, have created a new atmosphere of repression and the rule of the machines of war, threatening the international community and even the citizens of the countries that possess them.

Ironically, those that have actually used nuclear weapons and continue to produce, stockpile and extensively test such weapons; that have used depleted uranium bombs and bullets against tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of Iraqis and Kuwaitis, and even their own soldiers and those of their allies, afflicting them with incurable diseases; that blatantly violate their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); that have refrained from signing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); and that have armed the Zionist occupation regime with weapons of mass destruction — they are not only refusing to remedy their past actions, but, in clear breach of the NPT, are trying to prevent other countries from acquiring the technology necessary to produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

All of these problems emanate from the fact that the elements of justice and spirituality are missing in the way powerful Governments conduct their affairs with other nations.

After 11 September, a particular radical group was accused of terrorist activities, although it was never explained how such huge intelligence-gathering and security organizations had failed to prevent such an extensive and well-planned operation.

Why have Powers that not so long ago were supporting the activities of such groups in Afghanistan, thereby portraying themselves as supporters of human rights and of the Afghan people, overnight turned into their most fierce critics? Are we to believe that their benefactors — those very same hegemonic Powers — have lost control? If so, would it not be better for those Powers to adopt an honest and transparent approach to the international community, provide precise information about the main elements and their weapons and financial support system, and accept responsibility for their inhuman actions against nations and countries, thereby assisting peoples and nations in addressing the roots of terrorism correctly, wisely and sincerely?

We must endeavour to achieve sustainable tranquillity and peace based on justice and spirituality.

Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction are two major threats facing the international community. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as one of the main victims of terrorism and chemical weapons, fully appreciates the difficulties involved in combating these menaces. Today, the most serious challenge is that the culprits are assuming the role of the prosecutor. Even more dangerous is that certain parties, relying on their power and wealth, are trying to impose a climate of intimidation and injustice on the world. They are bullying others, while using their huge media resources to portray themselves as defenders of freedom, democracy and human rights.

People around the world are fully aware of what is happening in occupied Palestine. Women and children are being murdered and teenagers are being taken prisoner. Houses are being demolished and farms are being burned down. Yet when the people of Palestine resist these conditions, they are accused of terrorism. At the same time, the occupier, which does not abide by any principles, terror being part of its stated and regular policy, enjoys the support of the previously mentioned Governments. Let me be still more blunt. State terrorism is being supported by those who claim to fight terrorism.

How can one talk about human rights and at the same time blatantly deny many people the inalienable

right of access to science and technology, which have applications in the fields of medicine, industrial production and energy, and hinder their progress and development by means of force and intimidation? Can nations be deprived of scientific and technological progress through the threat of use of force and on the basis of mere allegations of possible military diversion? We believe that all countries and nations are entitled to technological and scientific advancement in all fields, and particularly to the peaceful technology to produce nuclear fuel. Such access cannot be restricted to a few, depriving most nations and thereby establishing economic monopolies which are then used as an instrument to expand domination.

We have gathered here to defend human rights in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and to prevent certain Powers from claiming that some countries have more rights or that some countries do not have the right to enjoy their legitimate rights.

We must not, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, revert to the logic of the Dark Ages and try once again to deny societies access to scientific and technological advances. The United Nations must be the symbol of democracy and of the equal rights of nations. If we talk about the equal rights of nations in political forums, we must talk of the same concept in this forum as well. Similarly, if we talk about the right of sovereignty, then all nations must be allowed to exercise their rights on an equal footing and in a democratic process.

The United Nations will be able to be the standard-bearer of democracy in the world when it, itself, is a manifestation of democratic process. I reiterate that sustainable tranquillity and peace can only be built on justice and spirituality.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a symbol of true democracy. All officials, including the Leader, President and members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, city and village councils are elected through the vote of the citizens. The Islamic Republic of Iran has held 27 national elections in 27 years. This showcases a vibrant and dynamic society in which people participate broadly in political life.

Because of its key importance and influence in the important and strategic Middle East region, the Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to contributing actively to the promotion of peace and stability in that region.

The Saddam and the Taliban regimes were both the products of foreign Powers. The people of Afghanistan and of Iraq know very well who supported those two regimes. Today, to establish peace and security in the region, foreign occupation forces must leave and completely hand over the political and economic sovereignty of those two countries to their peoples.

The Islamic Republic of Iran will continue to provide full and comprehensive support to the people of Iraq and Afghanistan and to their elected Governments and will actively help them establish order and security. My country will continue to expand its sincere cooperation and interaction with them.

In Palestine, a sustainable peace will be possible through justice, an end to discrimination, an end to the occupation of Palestinian land, the return of all Palestinian refugees and the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Today, more than ever, nations need constructive, positive and honest cooperation and interaction in order to enjoy a dignified, tranquil and peaceful life based on justice and spirituality. Let us enter into a collective covenant to realize this legitimate aspiration of our nations.

Here, I should like to talk briefly about the approach and initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on the nuclear issue. Nuclear weapons and their proliferation, on the one hand, and attempts to impose an apartheid regime on access to peaceful nuclear energy, on the other, are two major threats to international tranquillity and peace.

Keeping in mind that in past years no serious efforts complemented by practical mechanisms have been made to move towards full disarmament and, more specifically, to implement the decisions and outcomes of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) review conferences of 1995 and 2000, I suggest that the General Assembly, as the most inclusive United Nations organ, mandate an ad hoc committee to compile and submit a comprehensive report on possible practical mechanisms and strategies for complete disarmament. Such a committee should also be asked to investigate how, in violation of the NPT, material, technology and equipment for nuclear weapons were transferred to the Zionist regime, and to propose practical measures for the establishment of a

nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Some powerful States practise a discriminatory approach against access by NPT States parties to material, equipment, and peaceful nuclear technology. In doing so, they intend to impose a nuclear apartheid. We are concerned that once certain powerful States completely control nuclear energy resources and technology, they will deny access to other States and thus deepen the divide between powerful countries and the rest of the international community. When that happens, we shall be divided into light and dark countries.

Regrettably, in the past 30 years, no effective measure has been implemented to facilitate the exercise of the legally recognized right of NPT States parties to have access to and to use peaceful nuclear energy in accordance with article IV. Therefore, the General Assembly should ask the International Atomic Energy Agency — in accordance with article II of its Statute — to report on violations by specific countries that have hindered the implementation of the above article and also to produce practical strategies for its renewed implementation.

It is particularly important to note that the peaceful use of nuclear energy without possession of the nuclear fuel cycle is an empty proposition. Countries and peoples that rely for their fuel on coercive powers and stop at nothing to further their interests may indeed become totally dependent on nuclear power plants. No popularly elected, responsible Government would consider such a situation to be in the interest of its people. The history of dependence on oil in oil-rich countries under domination is an experience that no independent country would be willing to repeat.

Those hegemonic Powers that consider the scientific and technological progress of independent and free nations to be a challenge to their monopoly on those important instruments of power and which do not want to see such achievements in other countries, have misrepresented Iran's healthy and fully safeguarded technological endeavours in the nuclear field as a pursuit of nuclear weapons. That is nothing but a propaganda ploy. The Islamic Republic of Iran is presenting in good faith its proposal for constructive interaction and a just dialogue. However, if some try to impose their will on the Iranian people by resorting to a language of force and threats against Iran, we will reconsider our entire approach to the nuclear issue.

Allow me, as the elected President of the Iranian people, to outline the other main elements of my country's initiative regarding the nuclear issue.

First, the Islamic Republic of Iran reaffirms its previously and repeatedly stated position that, in accordance with our religious principles, the pursuit of nuclear weapons is prohibited.

Secondly, the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that it is necessary to revitalize the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, as I proposed earlier, to create an ad hoc committee to combat nuclear weapons and abolish the apartheid that exists in the field of peaceful nuclear technology.

Thirdly, the fuel cycle of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not technically different from that of other countries that have peaceful nuclear technology. Therefore, as a further confidence-building measure and in order to provide the greatest degree of transparency, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnerships with the private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of a uranium enrichment programme in Iran. That represents the most far-reaching step — beyond all requirements of the NPT — proposed by Iran as a further confidence-building measure.

Fourthly, in keeping with Iran's inalienable right to have access to a nuclear fuel cycle, continued interaction and technical and legal cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency will be the centrepiece of our nuclear policy. The initiation and the continuation of negotiations with other countries will be carried out in the context of Iran's interaction with the Agency. With that in mind, I have directed the relevant Iranian officials to compile the legal and technical details of Iran's nuclear approach, based on the following considerations.

First, international precedent tells us that nuclear fuel delivery contracts are unreliable, and no legally binding international document or instrument exists to guarantee the delivery of nuclear fuel. On many occasions such bilateral contracts have either been suspended or stopped altogether for political reasons. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran, in its pursuit of peaceful nuclear technology, considers it to be within its legitimate rights to receive objective guarantees for uranium enrichment in the nuclear fuel cycle.

Secondly, in its negotiations with the European Union three, Iran has tried in earnest to demonstrate the solid and legitimate foundations of its nuclear activity in the context of the NPT and to establish mutual trust. The selection of our negotiating partners and the continuation of negotiations with the European Union three will be commensurate with the requirements of our cooperation with the Agency regarding the non-diversion of the process of uranium enrichment to non-peaceful purposes, within the framework of the NPT. In that context, several proposals have been presented that can be considered in the context of the negotiations.

Thirdly, the discriminatory approach with respect to the NPT, focusing on the obligations of States parties while disregarding their rights under the Treaty, should cease.

As the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, I assure the Assembly that my country will do everything in its power to contribute to global tranquillity and peace, based on the two values of spirituality and justice, and on the principle of equal rights of all peoples and nations. My country will interact and cooperate constructively with the international community to face the challenges before us.

From the beginning of time, humanity has longed for the day when justice, peace, equality and compassion would envelop the world. All of us can contribute to the establishment of such a world. When that day comes, the ultimate promise of all divine religions will be fulfilled with the emergence of a perfect human being who is heir to all prophets and pious men. He will lead the world to justice and absolute peace.

Almighty Lord, I pray to you to hasten the appearance of your last repository — the promised one, that perfect and pure human being, the one who will fill this world with justice and peace. O Lord, include us among his companions, followers and those who serve his cause.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of South Africa.

Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Mbeki: First, I would like to salute Mr. Jean Ping, the outgoing President of the General Assembly, for the work he did to guide the General Assembly as the nations of the world considered the immensely important matters that led to the elaboration of the outcome document that was adopted last night.

I would also like to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that you will lead the Assembly well as it confronts the challenge of implementing the decisions taken during the millennium review summit and remains seized of other important matters that were not adequately addressed in the outcome document.

Shortly before we convened here for the millennium review summit, an important meeting of Christian leaders took place in Washington, D.C. Those leaders issued a communiqué entitled "A Call to Partnership", directed at our summit meeting. In part the call says,

> "At the urgent call of church leaders in the southern hemisphere, we came together at the Washington National Cathedral as Christian leaders from diverse traditions and places, both rich and poor, in the South and the North, united in a common concern for those of us living in poverty. We see their faces; we hear their voices; they are a part of us, and we are a part of them.
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> "As the United Nations reaches its sixtieth anniversary, we give thanks for its work in peacemaking and global reconciliation, particularly the historic commitment to eradicate poverty in the Millennium Declaration of 2000.

> Five years have passed, and, despite the triumph of principle, there has been a failure in practice. In this communiqué, we offer our partnership to the leaders gathered at the World Summit at the United Nations in building a global movement to make real the promises of the Millennium Development Goals as a crucial step towards a more just world for all God's children.
>
> "We believe that God calls us to place people struggling with poverty at the centre of our concern. Globalization has brought unprecedented economic growth. At the same time, one sixth of the world's people still fight daily for survival under the crushing burden of extreme poverty. The increasing concentration of wealth in our world, while so many suffer, is a scandal that impoverishes us all.
>
> "We believe that the spirit of partnership between rich and poor, exemplified in the MDGs, is a way the world can address poverty in all its dimensions. In particular, we support the goal of a global partnership for development, and believe that the Churches can make a unique contribution to that partnership."

If nothing else, the fact that the religious leaders who issued that call gathered from many parts of the world to agree on a message to our summit Meeting must remind us that the masses — the people who elected us — entertain high expectations about the United Nations. They see this Organization as their pre-eminent partner in the continuing struggle to build a better and humane world.

They challenge those of us who have the privilege to represent our States in the United Nations to build, strengthen and direct this world Organization so that it can, indeed, play its role as a pre-eminent partner of the peoples of the world in constructing a better and more humane world.

Accordingly, I believe that we must view with the greatest seriousness their conclusion that five years have passed since we adopted the Millennium Declaration and that, "despite this triumph of principle, there has been a failure in practice".

Sixty years ago, in the aftermath of the destructive fury of the Second World War and the villainous genocide committed during that war, the United Nations was formed, in the words of the Charter, "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind".

Responding to the universal demand for human and peoples' rights, the founders declared that they were forming the United Nations "to reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small" and to "promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom".

As we gather here, in part to celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of an international Organization established to bring hope to the peoples of the world, we cannot avoid asking some hard questions. That is necessary if we are to live up to our obligation to ensure that the United Nations discharges its responsibilities, described by the religious leaders who met at the Washington National Cathedral as peacemaking, global reconciliation and the eradication of poverty.

We must ask ourselves how well prepared the United Nations is today, 60 years after it was established, to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war; to protect and advance the fundamental human rights of all; to protect and advance the dignity and worth of each human person; to ensure equal rights between men and women; to ensure equal rights between nations large and small; and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

We must ask — and answer honestly — whether what we do as the United Nations is properly described as a triumph of principle but a failure in practice, as the religious leaders put it.

The reality is that, 60 years after the United Nations was formed as a response to the appalling and ghastly results of the crime of racism, we are still confronted by the cancer of racism. Although the United Nations has adopted important decisions on that matter, and convened the necessary conferences to unite the peoples of the world against racism, those who continue to fall victim to that crime against humanity would find it difficult to cite the instances when the United Nations came to their aid.

Sixty years after the United Nations was formed, the indecencies of war and violent conflict continue to afflict innocent people, evidently because we, the

United Nations, lack the will to live up to the commitment that was made when this Organization was established.

Africans, who have been exposed to many violent conflicts since the United Nations was formed, are particularly keen for this Organization to live up to its obligation to save succeeding African generations from the scourge of war. Even as we speak, the United Nations is faced with the urgent task of taking the necessary action in Côte d'Ivoire to help to bring a lasting peace to that important African country, opening the way to its reunification, the holding of democratic elections and the promotion of social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, to use the words of the Charter.

A similar challenge faces this Organization with regard to the restoration of lasting peace in Darfur in the Sudan, building on the historic conclusion and implementation of the Sudanese Comprehensive Peace Agreement, signed in Nairobi, Kenya, earlier this year.

Only 11 years ago, we experienced a terrible genocide in Rwanda, and thousands were killed in the internecine conflict that took place in the Balkans. Those who were exposed to the savagery would be fully justified in concluding that the United Nations had betrayed its commitment to the peoples of the world.

I am certain that all of us are impatient to see an end to the conflicts in the Middle East, including Iraq, and in particular the restoration of the rights of the people of Palestine, in the context of the successful implementation of the road map.

While we welcome recent positive developments in this regard, we must accept the reality that every day that passes without the full implementation of the road map only serves to point an accusing finger at us, the United Nations, accusing us of not having done everything we could to help secure the just and lasting peace that is the right of the Palestinian, the Israeli and the Arab peoples.

We have all recognized the serious and urgent threat posed by international terrorism to all our nations. We have all accepted the reality that we need a multilateral response to that common threat. Yet we have still not succeeded in arriving at a common definition of that threat or identified its fundamental causes.

The issues of non-proliferation and the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction are matters of critical concern to all nations, both large and small. Yet we failed to address those matters in the outcome document adopted at the review summit last night, even as the issue of nuclear weapons and their non-proliferation is among the most prominent items in world news and on the international agenda. None of us could justly claim that our failure as the United Nations to take specific decisions on these matters served to enhance global security in the face of the threat of weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to the issue of Iran, we firmly believe that negotiations should resume and that the matter be settled within the framework of the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and with the full participation of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The gap between the rich and the poor is becoming worse within and between countries, as observed by the United Nations Development Programme's 2005 *Human Development Report*, which states that the gap between the average citizen in the richest and in the poorest countries is wide and is getting wider. It states that in 1990 the average American was 38 times richer than the average Tanzanian, while today the average American is 61 times richer.

The same report states, on page 3,

> "In 2003, 18 countries with a combined population of 460 million people registered lower scores on the human development index (HDI) than in 1990 — an unprecedented reversal. In the midst of an increasingly prosperous global economy, 10.7 million children every year do not live to see their fifth birthday, and more than 1 billion people survive in abject poverty on less than a $1 a day."

Accordingly, if we pause and scan the road travelled to judge whether we have succeeded in saving the world from the scourge of war; whether we have built a world that has reaffirmed faith in fundamental human rights; whether we have created a world that has restored the dignity and worth of the human person — a world that has entrenched equal rights for men and women and for nations, large and small — the answer from the majority of the people of the world may very well be a resounding "No".

The United Nations has adopted many decisions intended to help address the various global challenges that have persisted over the 60 years of its existence. Accordingly, we have the necessary policies to address the social, economic, political and other problems facing humanity. We have also adopted comprehensive and clear programmes to give effect to those policies and have identified the resources required for their implementation.

The questions we must answer are: why have we not implemented these programmes, and what must be done to correct the situation?

The process of globalization means that our common world is more integrated today than it was when the United Nations was formed 60 years ago. Similarly, the interconnectedness of the issues of peace, security, development and human rights has never been more pronounced than it is today. All this means that the imperatives that made it necessary and correct to establish the United Nations as part of a desirable system of global governance are that much more compelling today, and that the necessary reform of the Organization must take place to ensure that it reflects the new global realities since it was formed and that it is empowered to respond effectively to the urgent challenges that face all humanity.

And yet, the painful paradox we face is that it seems obvious that, over the years, there has been a continuous erosion of the authority and prestige of the United Nations and a sustained drift towards its marginalization in terms of playing its rightful role, as so clearly defined in the United Nations Charter. At its sixtieth session, the General Assembly has the heavy responsibility to reassert the critical need for the United Nations to discharge its responsibilities as spelled out in that Charter. Experience over the last 60 years has shown that, to address the criticism levelled against the Organization by religious leaders — that there has been a triumph of principle and a failure in practice — we must be ready to engage in a sustained struggle to ensure that the vision contained in the United Nations Charter is actually translated into reality.

As we engage in this struggle, we should say, as did the religious leaders who met at the Washington National Cathedral, that we are united in a common concern for those of us living in poverty: "We see their faces; we hear their voices; they are a part of us, and we are a part of them."

Let me close by reiterating our deepest sympathies and condolences to the Government and the people of the United States in the wake of the death and destruction wreaked by Hurricane Katrina.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of South Africa for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam.

His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah: I would like to offer my congratulations to the President on his election. In doing so, I assure all our fellow members of Brunei Darussalam's continued strong support for the United Nations.

Much of the attention at almost every great international meeting for the past four years has been given to the inhuman acts of global terrorists. Inevitably, this has focused on specific events. That is understandable, of course, and we in Brunei Darussalam again add our voices to the condemnation of all such actions. We offer our deepest condolences to the families of all who have suffered losses.

Nevertheless, as we meet our respected fellow Members of the United Nations, we again state what we have continuously said since the onset of the current wave of global terrorism. These brutal attacks extend beyond personal grief and national

condemnation. They are symptomatic of many grave threats the people of the world face today. As such, they constitute nothing less than an attack on world order.

For this reason, we believe it is high time the world order asserted itself in modern terms. In other words, a new, revitalized United Nations is called for — not for us as Heads of State, or for our diplomats, or for any of us who are privileged and have the means, the education and the opportunity to live in hope and confidence. A new United Nations is needed by the ordinary citizens we are privileged to represent here.

If world order is indeed under attack, that means ordinary people and their families are also under attack. In far too many ways, it is not merely an attack. It is an all-out assault. It comes not merely from criminal terrorists: it comes from many aspects of globalization, from international crime, from new technology, from social and cultural disruption, from a rapidly degrading environment and from the grave threats posed by the possible spread of fearful new diseases. In real, immediate human terms, it comes from fear, from injustice, from a loss of absolute values and from sheer rage. It is revealed in feelings of hopelessness and an almost total loss of confidence.

Many of us here, especially those from small developing nations, are, therefore, convinced that world order must be dramatically strengthened. As I stated at the High-level Plenary Meeting two days ago (see A/60/PV.6), there is no greater way to begin this process than for each of us to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). For this reason, we in Brunei Darussalam will do whatever we can to achieve them in our own country and to help our neighbours do likewise.

In setting the Millennium Goals, we recognized that, in order to re-establish world order, the root causes of anger, despair, injustice and hatred must be addressed. I would, therefore, once more like to commend the Secretary-General and his staff and the United Nations agencies, both professional and volunteer, for all they have done in the field to deepen our understanding of those causes. The causes have become clearly defined in all their urgency. They are political, social, cultural and economic. In each case, we do not believe that solutions can be imposed. When the international community is so gravely divided on matters such as nuclear development, arms proliferation, globalization, the environment and social injustice, this body must be the judge of whether international conduct is acceptable. Solutions to international problems must come from truly united nations acting in concert. In other words, the United Nations must be an efficient world organization committed to tackling root causes and insisting on dialogue and negotiation as the sole means of settling disputes, no matter how long it takes and no matter how frustrating the process may be.

The global crisis arising from the search for the best way to deal with modern, technology-fuelled terrorism highlights that need. For many years, we have maintained that understanding root causes must be a very important part of any long-term approach to tackling terrorist activities.

Of course, every possible form of bilateral and multilateral cooperation is needed to deal with the criminals involved. But condemnation is not enough, and legislation is never sufficient. All attempts to justify acts of terrorism must be resolutely countered, not by exchanges of opposing definitions of evil but by determination to eradicate all possible root causes, which some may wrongly see as justifying such acts.

That is very difficult. It requires consensus here at the United Nations on what constitutes injustice, especially historical injustice, and on what constitutes unfairness. That, in turn, demands a new, reformed United Nations.

We are a small nation. Our interest lies in working closely with all other Members. For that reason, we shall offer whatever help we can to building the broadest possible consensus on all the many far-reaching decisions that the Organization is currently called upon to make.

The most important of those decisions at present concerns the question of United Nations reform. Like many of our fellow Members, we have long given our strong support to reform. In recent months, we have held discussions with many colleagues that go far beyond matters of principle; they have dealt with specific proposals. Most of them aim at redesigning the structure of the Organization, including the Security Council. Our response has been the one we have always offered. We will listen with respect. We will acknowledge the good faith of all our fellow Members, and we will help in any way we can to achieve the broadest possible consensus. That, we think, is not a

way of avoiding the hard decisions that have to be made. On the contrary, we believe it serves to recognize how hard those decisions are and how important this body is to the world.

The consensus that was reached 60 years ago was a strong one. It served the world well for many decades. It now appears very clear that, although the structure of the United Nations remains in place, the world has changed enormously. A new consensus is being sought. Unlike the consensus reached at the end of the Second World War, it is not directed at the means to maintain peace; it is aimed at creating the conditions for lasting peace. We see that as the only way for the United Nations to block all forces of violence and inhumanity by means of a strong and just world order.

When it is time for the Assembly to decide, we in Brunei Darussalam will consider all proposals in that light.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam for his statement.

His Majesty Haji Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by The Honourable Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Kenya.

The Honourable Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency The Honourable Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Kibaki: It gives me great pleasure to address the General Assembly on the occasion of my first visit to the United Nations as head of State. First, I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to preside over the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his able stewardship of our Organization and the reform proposals he has put forward for our consideration. Since his appointment, the Secretary-General has steered the United Nations with tact and patience. His skill as a builder of consensus has indeed been exemplary. We share his vision for the United Nations in the twenty-first century as outlined in his epic report entitled "In larger freedom" (A/59/2005). I am confident that Member States will seize this historic opportunity and deliver on the promise of a better world for posterity.

The shift in the global distribution of power, accompanied by the emergence of new threats and challenges, has dramatically changed the context within which the United Nations operates. The United Nations of the future must still, however, remain true to the universal values that inspired its creation. Our peoples expect the United Nations to act as an agent of progress. They look to the Organization to play an effective and leading role in improving their economic and social well-being.

Kenya embraces the principles of the Charter, which serve as a basic reference point for the reform of the United Nations. Those principles are the core of its inner strength. We believe that the principle of democracy is as central to this Organization and its future health as it is to the prosperity of our own nations. Kenya deeply cherishes that principle and seeks its generous spread around the world and in this institution.

Global problems require global solutions. The United Nations is the only vehicle that can help us attain those solutions and give legitimacy to our actions. The United Nations remains indispensable in the maintenance of international peace and security. It is pivotal to the attainment of sustainable development and the advancement of human rights. Let us work to strengthen the United Nations to meet contemporary challenges.

Important proposals for United Nations reform are already on the table. My Government embraces the holistic definition of collective security, which strongly affirms the connections between peace, development, human rights and the rule of law. Those goals cannot be realized in isolation. As the Secretary-General observed, "we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights" (*A/59/2005, para. 17*). I am sure we all acknowledge those plain truths.

Kenya firmly believes that reform of the United Nations is a process, not an event. In view of the integrated nature of the issues, we need to adopt a comprehensive policy approach to United Nations reforms. We must maintain a broad vision driven by collective effort for the ultimate benefit of the international system.

I am happy to note that although some of the proposals have been adopted, we should now move quickly to implement them. I refer especially to the proposals that do not require amendment of the Charter. They include the adoption of a robust counter-terrorism strategy, strengthening peacekeeping, creating a Peacebuilding Commission and Fund and the reform of the human rights system.

I am also pleased to note the consensus on the strengthening of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and a strong relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

Environmental protection is a threat that is a major challenge in the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. This places the environment, more than ever, at the core of sustainable development. International environmental governance is an integral part of realizing sustainable development. Kenya fully endorses the ongoing process of defining the elements of international environmental governance. This, however, should be done within the framework of the Cartagena decision, which aims at strengthening the United Nations Environment Programme within its current mandate through an enhanced financial and scientific base.

We should also recognize that no truly effective response can be made unless the international community fully complies with its commitment to make the means available as provided for in various multilateral environmental agreements.

Kenya remains firmly committed to the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and is gratified with the status of its implementation, at both national and regional levels. Despite the progress made, small arms and other conventional weapons continue to end up in the hands of wrong non-State actors, with attendant adverse implications on peace and security leading to political instability in many countries. In order to curb this trend, Kenya requests the Secretary-General to undertake a study into the possibility of a legal instrument to control international transfers of conventional arms.

Kenya also supports proposals for the enhancement of peace-support operation capabilities of the United Nations. Any mandate for peacekeeping forces should be clear and precise. Adequate resources must be made available to the commanders in the field to enable them to execute their mandates effectively. Intervention in crisis situations must also be timely to prevent undue loss of life. Kenya welcomes vital contributions to peace and security made by regional organizations forging predictable partnerships between the United Nations and regional organizations.

Furthermore, Kenya endorses the proposal to establish a strategic military capacity to reinforce United Nations peacekeeping and the creation of a standby brigade for rapid deployment of the Organization's civilian police in peacekeeping operations.

We strongly support the Secretary-General's proposal to establish a Peacebuilding Commission and fund by 31 December 2005. We believe such a peacebuilding commission will contribute to the realization of real peace in many regions. However, it is important that critical questions about form, function and decision-making authority be resolved.

In our own neighbourhood, the importance of post-conflict peacebuilding has become a bigger priority after the recent successes of the Sudan and Somalia mediation efforts, which Kenya chaired under the auspices of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Kenya commends the international community for the excellent response during the Oslo pledging conference towards reconstruction of southern Sudan. We urge a similar response to support the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia in setting up and implementing a national security, stabilization and economic reconstruction strategy.

We also call upon the Security Council to play a more positive proactive role in the search for a broad consensus for peace and thus enhance the capacity of the Transitional Federal Government to establish basic institutions.

On the reform of the Security Council, it is necessary to make it far more equitable and

representative of the United Nations global constituency. The procedures and methods of work of the Council should be changed to secure transparency and dialogue with the United Nations membership.

Furthermore, the future composition of the Security Council should proceed on the basis of sovereign equality of States and equitable geographical representation.

Kenya welcomes the proposal to develop a stronger relationship between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations. For Africa, there is abundant political will in our continent to make the African Union succeed. I believe that external support, especially from the United Nations and the international community at large, would make the African Union work better.

The establishment of an African Union Peace and Security Council and of the intervention force planned to be set up by 2009 are measures aimed at advancing political stability in Africa to underpin economic development. Already, the African Union has taken the lead in Burundi and in Darfur, in the Sudan, where deployments of peacekeeping missions have preceded international action by the United Nations.

The recent pledges by the Group of Eight (G-8) countries to double aid to Africa and grant 100-per-cent debt relief to 18 developing countries were welcome. We hope they will honour their pledges and commitments in conformity with the agreement forged at the 2002 Monterrey International Conference on Financing for Development. Support by the G-8 will help African countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Kenya affirms the centrality of gender equality and recognizes the critical role that women must play in development. We also recognize that achievement of the Millennium Development Goals depends on the empowerment of women. As part of our effort to fully attain this objective, my Government has adopted a national policy on gender development. The aim is to integrate women in decision-making through legal, regulatory and institutional reforms.

I am convinced that, if we are to attain our common objective of revitalizing the United Nations, we should embrace the vision presented by the Secretary-General in his package of reforms. This will require political will and leadership on our part. I therefore urge Member States to seize this opportunity and endorse proposals on which there is broad consensus. As we contemplate strengthening and renewing our Organization, we should do so for posterity.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Kenya for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Paraguay.

Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Duarte Frutos (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to express the condolences of the people of Paraguay over the tragedy caused by Hurricane Katrina. I express my Government's solidarity with the victims and with the Government of the United States, and I ask God to swiftly assuage the grief of so many families.

We are gathered here to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Six decades is time enough to reflect on the historical process of this Organization and, above all, on the debate concerning the relevance of reforming it. This reform is absolutely crucial and must be directed not only to set up standards that would regulate the capacity of Powers to make war; it is of primary importance that the reform promote equitable economic development, because in a selfish world, where the number of society's orphans grows daily, it will be very difficult to have global peace.

Changes cannot be partial or superficial and must not merely satisfy the hegemonistic ambitions of a few. We need to govern globalization with democratically

agreed legal norms and bodies that, through their inherent legitimacy, would have the authority to ensure compliance with their regulations.

It must be a desire for world balance, not financial clout within the Organization, that should determine the direction to be followed in the United Nations; otherwise, the power of money will prevail over the power of justice and the rights of peoples, which would dangerously thwart the noble mission of the United Nations. This means that reform cannot deepen divisions; that would be illogical. The Charter must reassert the role of unity among diverse nations which, in spite of their differences, must live together and share their resources and values, which give dignity to the lives of men and women and of our peoples.

Development in equity and democracy is the formula. But to reach this stage, we need more international trade and cooperation. Lately a wall is rising to block our exports, while cooperation is being watered down — or the little cooperation that remains is undertaken unjustly or according to the mood of those involved. The old promise taken on by the richest nations to devote 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product (GDP) to less developed countries has not been respected thus far, except for the honourable exceptions of Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden and the Netherlands. But it is a hopeful sign that the President of the United States has said in this forum (see A/60/PV.2) that his Government is in a position to eliminate all the subsidies that cause backwardness and poverty for peoples with emerging economies insofar as the other rich nations do likewise. That would be of great benefit to people who are experiencing shortages due to the unfair international order that the President of the United States himself mentioned, so that our peoples' democracy can be stable and sustainable.

It is important to point out that between 1990 and 2003 the rich countries increased their per capita income by $6,070, while during the same period, their assistance per capita fell to one dollar; this reflects the great stinginess that prevails in the current globalization model. The United Nations has a primary role to play in humanizing that model.

The subsidies granted by rich countries to their agricultural sectors, as well as the assistance that they give to each other, are a cruel paradox. That assistance amounts to a little more than $1 billion annually and the subsidies to a little less. That global policy — weak in terms of cooperation and perverse in terms of trade — will end by undermining the emerging democracies in developing countries.

We in Paraguay are deeply convinced of those tenets. Our wish is to cooperate so that our noble purposes will govern the new world order. In our domestic affairs, we have managed to reverse a long process of deterioration to achieve macroeconomic stability and political institutionalization. We are working to increase growth and to strengthen democracy through good governance, thereby tackling and resolving our social problems in a way we had never done in the past.

Today my country, Paraguay, is becoming a nation in a predictable situation and one worthy of international trust. We are not bound by any political or economic dogma. Rather, we are seeking to liberate our people from crude fanaticism, from ideological prejudices, from political violence and from fatalism, because we believe we are capable of forging our own destiny in a world of greater brotherhood.

Indeed, Paraguay is rich in development potential. We have abundant natural resources: land, water and energy. And, even more important, we have a young population that is highly motivated to grow, to learn and to work. Even though our economy is still small, we are adopting policies and plans to expand our production, increase employment, improve domestic purchasing power and increase exports. We are moving towards an economy that can compete in terms of both quality and innovation.

Our country is among those States that lack direct access to the sea. Tragically, Paraguay is landlocked, which is a considerable obstacle to our aspiration to build an economy based on production and international trade. For that reason, we need to create special lending arrangements for landlocked developing countries, ensuring them differential treatment in areas such as lower interest rates and longer grace periods. Such measures could attenuate the comparative disadvantages we feel as a result of our geographical situations.

Another dimension I would like to touch on is the importance of new information and communication technologies and of biotechnological and other scientific research. The knowledge and use of those resources cannot be concentrated in the hands of the

few. They must be made universally available. Paraguay believes this to be a necessary prerequisite for the growth of global competitiveness.

Two years ago my Government inherited a situation of economic stagnation, recession, sterile political antagonism, violence, growing poverty and weak and unreliable public institutions that led to timid social policies that were a long way from addressing the Millennium Development Goals. Today we are recovering political and macroeconomic stability, democratic governance and, above all, trust in the Paraguayan State and in our business sector. We have great challenges ahead of us, but, with faith in the capacity of our people, we are tackling them to build a more just international order.

The major challenges in my country are tackling extreme poverty and health care, which affect the neediest sectors of the population: indigenous people and small farmers. To address those issues we have promoted a rapid increase in spending for social services to put a stop to growing poverty. We are financing new programmes: a social protection network for vulnerable groups, with financial subsidies linked to school attendance; in the field of health care, a nutrition programme for pregnant women and for boys and girls at risk for malnutrition; large-scale shipments of seeds for subsistence crops; the purchase of land for small farmers, with a view to ensuring social peace; free medical care for all children under the age of five; concessional electricity rates; and a scholarship programme for students from the most vulnerable schools. With humility, but also with great faith in the future and in the international community, democracy and freedom — we in Paraguay are building a socially, fiscally and environmentally responsible State.

In the international context, we join the appeal for a more just and humane world order in which the less developed nations are not condemned for all time to discrimination, indifference and backwardness. In order to achieve those goals we have no alternative to an inclusive multilateralism that offers balance, rationality and justice in international relations.

We also condemn terrorism in all its forms. We believe that terrorism is a threat to civilized processes and to the imperatives of resolving conflicts and establishing peaceful coexistence in the world in order to ensure the development and prosperity of our peoples.

Similarly, we reiterate, as we have done year after year, our formal support for Taiwan's inclusion in the United Nations, so that the brotherly and supportive Republic of China can have a place and become an integral part of our Organization as a full-fledged Member, in accordance with the principle of universality and the norms of international law.

In addition, my country is deeply concerned by the instability and high prices in international oil markets, which militate against our hard-won macroeconomic stability. Our country has not escaped the harmful impact of that phenomenon, given the most unjust burden on society: inflation. We are making every effort to control inflation, because we know that high oil prices have a negative impact on economic growth and poverty reduction. Today, our Government is significantly subsidizing the price of oil, thus depriving the State of major financial resources for necessary social programmes.

I would like to say at this meeting that Paraguay is suffering from a misapplication of international justice. There is an attempt to prohibit payments to our State from financial transactions carried out by representatives of a corrupt dictatorship which, with the complicity of a group of international banks, wants to deprive us of resources that we desperately need for social peace in our country. We hope that the appropriate United Nations bodies will not permit the peoples of developing economies to be deprived of major resources through devious legal procedures. We hope for justice in this area from international institutions.

The United Nations must either change to lead and to take up the challenges of our time, or it will hide behind a superficial change in order to survive and will become an accomplice in the regression of our peoples and the perpetuation of backwardness. This is a crucial moment that we are experiencing as leaders of our countries, sixty years after the creation of the United Nations and five after the Millennium Development Goals. We find ourselves at a crossroads with two paths before us: one of injustice and indifference that leads to a world that is increasingly poor, unfair and insecure, and the other the path of far-reaching change that leads to peace and global well-being.

I would like to express my hope that this historic session of the General Assembly will obtain the commitments and actions required to reduce and eliminate the suffering, abandonment and frustration of thousands of millions of people and that our efforts will yield its expected fruits for the well-being of mankind.

I trust that God will give us the necessary wisdom and strength required to lead our countries along the path of liberty, peace, development and justice.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Paraguay for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Nicanor Duarte Frutos, President of the Republic of Paraguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by His Excellency Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia.

Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Pohamba: I wish to congratulate you most warmly, Mr. President, on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session and to assure you of my delegation's full support. May I also express our profound appreciation to your distinguished predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping of Gabon, for the effective leadership he provided during the fifty-ninth session.

I am most delighted and indeed honoured to address this Assembly for the first time as President of the Republic of Namibia. I stand before you with the democratic mandate given to me by the people of Namibia during our presidential elections in November 2004 and following my inauguration on 21 March 2005.

At the same occasion, we celebrated 15 years of our national independence, which, as the Assembly will recall, was brought about by a long and bitter struggle waged by the people of Namibia under the leadership of the national liberation movement, SWAPO, with wide international support, and thus culminating in the implementation of Security Council resolution 435 (1978).

I recall these important events in our history to underline the fact that Namibia's nationhood is directly linked to the United Nations. In this regard, allow me, therefore, on behalf of the Government and people of Namibia and indeed on my own behalf to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the men and women of the United Nations family, who stood side by side with us until final victory was achieved.

As we mark the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, it is indeed proper and fitting to reflect on the achievements and setbacks of our Organization since its inception. In this exercise, we must be guided by an honest and objective analysis of events along the path we have travelled so far.

In this connection, I would like to take this opportunity to commend our Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, most sincerely for his tireless efforts to strengthen the United Nations system through the proposed reforms. Indeed, the challenges we face today require renewed commitment and visionary leadership to ensure efficient and effective service delivery to all humanity.

When we address the crucial issue of the reform of the United Nations system, we must be guided by the principles of democracy, equity, justice and fairness for all. At the centre of this overdue exercise must be the compelling need to serve all our people better, regardless of their race, religion or status of development.

With specific reference to the Security Council, genuine democratization and reform can take place only when all its members are accorded the same privileges — including the veto power, which is currently enjoyed only by a few member States, who use it for national self-interest. That creates resentment and mistrust from those who are negatively affected by the abuse of veto power.

It is against this background that African States adopted the Harare Declaration in 1997, in which they

demanded that the veto power be abolished. However, if the veto power is maintained, it is only logical that new permanent member States who join the expanded Security Council must of necessity be accorded the same rights and privileges. Otherwise, such reform will be cosmetic at best, and meaningless at worst.

On this very crucial matter, Namibia fully stands by the Ezulwini Consensus and the Sirte Declaration, as reaffirmed by the Fourth Extraordinary Summit of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa on 4 August 2005. We collectively maintain that the African continent, which has been underrepresented for so long, deserves two permanent seats with veto power and five non-permanent seats on the Council. This demand is logical, reasonable and justifiable. We therefore call on all regions to support Africa's position. It is indeed only when we stand together on firm principle that we can effect real and meaningful change in our only truly international Organization, the United Nations.

Concerning the General Assembly, Namibia holds the strong view that that organ, which provides a genuinely democratic and representative platform for all Member States to be heard, should play a critical role in the entire reform process of our international Organization. We are equally of the strong conviction that the authority of the General Assembly should be reasserted, to ensure that its resolutions and decisions are binding and enforceable.

In this crucial process, our highest priority should be our collective commitment to ensure sustainable social and economic development on a global scale. In order to achieve that goal, we must be guided by a strong spirit of human solidarity and a shared sense of justice and fairness for all.

For many developing countries, implementation of the Millennium Development Goals is severely hampered by the lack of adequate resources, compounded by other challenges, including the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and tuberculosis, as well as other socio-economic difficulties. Against that background, the Economic and Social Council must be strengthened and given sufficient resources, together with the United Nations agencies, in order to take the lead in implementing effective human-centred country programmes.

We accept the fact that Governments in developing countries have a responsibility to work together and to encourage the active participation of the private sector, civil society and other stakeholders in bringing about sustainable social and economic development for all segments of our society.

It is equally important that Governments and institutions in the economically advanced countries offer genuine partnership by providing new and additional resources, commensurate with their commitments in line with the Millennium Development Goals. To that end, if the countries regarded as low-middle-income countries are to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, they will require increased support from the international community, including market access as well as access to financial sources such as the International Development Association and official development assistance.

Our ability to effectively eliminate threats to international peace and security will depend on the manner in which we address the social and economic challenges facing our peoples at the global level.

In our review, during the 2005 summit, of the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and of other decisions taken by major international conferences, it became clear that we still have a long way to go to honour our commitments. It is therefore important that we narrow our differences and form a common front with a common objective to better serve humanity. We should therefore make collective and effective use of existing multilateral mechanisms, especially the United Nations, in order to succeed in eliminating current and future threats.

The process of decolonization has not yet been completed. The peoples of Palestine and of the Western Sahara continue to suffer under foreign occupation and are denied the exercise of their inalienable rights to self-determination and national independence. It is our collective responsibility to rectify that historical injustice. In that regard, we call for the immediate and unconditional establishment of an independent State of Palestine and the full implementation of the United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara.

I am equally concerned at the fact that the people of Cuba continue to suffer from the effects of the unilateral embargo imposed on them by the United States of America. We call on the international community to demand the unconditional lifting of that embargo.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate my Government's hope that, when we accept our collective responsibility, the United Nations can and will succeed in preserving international peace and security and therefore guarantee equality and justice for all humanity. We, the peoples of the United Nations, must do what is required to bequeath to the next generations a better future. To that end, the Government and the people of Namibia pledge our total commitment.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Namibia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Hifikepunye Pohamba, President of the Republic of Namibia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Slovak Republic.

Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Gašparovič: At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I am confident that your experience in multilateral diplomacy, coupled with a positive approach, will serve as a guarantee of success for the outcome of your decisions. Ahead of us lie demanding tasks related to the implementation of the reform decisions that have been adopted. I wish to assure that you can fully rely on Slovakia's support in that regard.

I wish also to convey our solidarity to the United States citizens devastated by Hurricane Katrina, who are struggling to recover from the trauma of losing their loved ones and their homes. On behalf of the people and the Government of Slovakia, I extend heartfelt sympathy to the families of the victims who perished in that natural disaster.

We are gathered here in this forum because the challenges faced by humankind in the area of global development, security and protection of human rights bring us together in our search for common solutions that call for clear political decisions. There is a general understanding that the United Nations, in its current shape and form, is not up to the challenges that lie ahead of it in the twenty-first century. Accordingly, we must follow through with the necessary changes so that this Organization may continue to fulfil its role efficiently while keeping abreast of the growing needs and expectations of the international community.

The Secretary-General has submitted his plan, which contains a package of bold reform steps laying down ways for the international community to deal with current issues and upgrade the United Nations system. Since the very day on which it was published, Slovakia has believed that his plan provides an excellent basis for our deliberations. We endorse the premise that progress in tackling the most important global problems can only be achieved if the issues of development, security and human rights are addressed jointly. In particular, we welcome the fact that human rights are accorded the same priority as development and security, and we appreciate the relevant proposals to strengthen the international system for the protection of human rights.

The reform of the United Nations is not a matter to be dealt with by the Organization alone, as responsibility for reaching concrete consensus on key issues lies primarily in the hands of the Governments of Member States. Reaching agreement that accommodates the interests of the entire world is no easy task. This year's summit and its outcome document have forced us to look in the mirror. They have shown us the amount of vision, wisdom and courage that we were able and willing to bring to this task, with a view to fundamentally reforming the system of multilateral cooperation in the interest of global development. The image we saw reflected in the mirror was not to everyone's liking, but that is the nature of multilateral diplomacy. It is the result of compromise, the art of the possible, which is both its strong and its weak point. In that connection, I prefer taking a forward-looking approach with regard to the outcome document, which contains messages and ideas that deserve our support in the General Assembly. Let us try to go ahead with its implementation as best we can.

Despite the considerable progress achieved — primarily in the fight against poverty and famine in Asia — all reports draw attention to the extremely alarming and unacceptable downturn in several parts of Africa. Slovakia came to the summit with the understanding that our first priority was to make progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In my view, the outcome document provides a solid basis for our future work in that regard.

Slovakia has not been inactive in that respect. The amount of public funds appropriated for foreign aid has quadrupled since the year 2000, which speaks for itself. In addition, having joined the European Union in May 2004, Slovakia also joined the common European development aid system. As a new member of the Union, Slovakia pledged to do its utmost to increase its official development assistance to 0.17 per cent of gross domestic product by 2010, and to 0.33 per cent by 2015.

Slovakia is directly funding and implementing more than 70 projects in the poor countries of Europe, Asia and Africa. That gives us the opportunity to directly pass on to developing countries the unique knowledge that we acquired during our own country's transition.

In addition to favouring an increase in aid, Slovakia also supports further reform of trade relations as well as debt relief for poor countries. I wish to highlight the serious debt relief measures that Slovakia took earlier this year, forgiving several hundred million dollars in debt owed by heavily indebted poor countries.

Slovakia welcomes efforts aimed at liberalizing trade as a means to promote economic growth and development. We therefore join the call for an expeditious completion of the World Trade Organization's Doha round of negotiations.

At this point, I must mention that one of the most serious global threats is the escalation of terrorism. It is commendable that the outcome document clearly denounces this new plague of our time, which endangers the population of rich and poor countries alike. Slovakia has clearly opposed all forms of violence and expressions of blind fanaticism and hatred. During the summit, in order to demonstrate Slovakia's position, I personally signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which is the latest in a series of anti-terrorist international treaty instruments. Slovakia is also a signatory to all 12 United Nations anti-terrorism conventions. Slovakia strongly supports the comprehensive strategy to fight terrorism presented by Secretary-General Kofi Annan at the Madrid Conference in March 2005.

I must say that Slovakia had expected that the summit would have formulated a clear definition of terrorism, which is an important prerequisite for the adoption of a comprehensive anti-terrorism convention. While we did not achieve that, it is nevertheless imperative that we redouble our efforts to draft such a convention in order that it can still be adopted during this sixtieth session. The outcome document will serve as a good starting point for that effort.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to represent the most serious threat to global security. It is therefore regrettable that the outcome document leaves us with more questions than answers.

As a member of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Slovakia recognizes the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy without the possibility of misusing that technology to produce nuclear arms. We therefore believe that in order to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons it is crucial to strengthen the supervisory competencies of the IAEA and to control more effectively the stages in the nuclear fuel cycle that involve uranium enrichment and plutonium processing. However, such restrictions must take account of the right of countries that fully satisfy their treaty obligations to obtain energy from nuclear power.

Slovakia supported the proposal to set up a Human Rights Council as a permanent principal body of the United Nations. The Human Rights Council should follow up on all the positive and constructive features of the existing Human Rights Commission. Members of the Human Rights Council should be elected by a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. The Slovak Republic is in favour of the Council being composed of a small number of members in order to give it the necessary flexibility in responding to emerging problems. Slovakia supported the proposal to elect members of the Council on a regional basis, and from countries that demonstrably meet their commitments concerning the protection of human rights. Slovakia also encourages closer

interactions between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council and the Security Council. In that context, we welcome the proposal in the summit's outcome document to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

We were also pleased to note that, for the first time, the outcome document contains a broader definition of the principle of the responsibility to protect. Slovakia looks forward to further work in that regard. We believe that after Cambodia, Rwanda, the Sudan and Srebrenica, we are slowly entering a stage where we take on more direct responsibility for dealing with situations where genocide and war crimes are committed. The principle of sovereignty means that responsibility for people lies with each sovereign country and its Government. However, if a particular Government fails to live up to that responsibility, the international community has the obligation to take all necessary steps and use all available and necessary means to prevent a major humanitarian disaster.

Slovakia was very much in favour of the proposal to set up a Peacebuilding Commission. Experience shows us that we must not rush to leave a country that has just seen the end of a conflict and simply turn our backs on the whole situation. Our recent history has provided us several bad examples in that regard. We must strengthen our efforts with a view to setting up an effective Peacebuilding Commission in the shortest amount of time possible. The outcome document sets out clear parameters and a timeframe for its establishment.

I mentioned at the outset that it is essential to realign the United Nations with the reality of our modern era. In that regard, it is essential to further revitalize the General Assembly. We must also reform the Economic and Social Council so as to make it capable of effectively implementing the development agenda of the United Nations.

With respect to reorganizing the Secretariat, we are in favour of increasing the flexibility, and strengthening the authority of, the Secretary-General in his managerial functions as the head of the Organization, in order to enable him to keep abreast of the current needs of the United Nations. He must be given the necessary resources to perform his role. At the same time, it will be necessary to strengthen the independence and powers of internal supervisory bodies in order to ensure more transparency and accountability inside the Organization. Of course, all the reforms will require appropriate funding in order not to dissipate the efforts that were necessary to reach consensus.

Among the reforms that have enjoyed Slovakia's long-standing support is the reform of the Security Council. This is an issue on which, despite ongoing efforts, we were unable to reach a balanced agreement. We need a more democratic and more representative Security Council that better reflects today's new geopolitical situation. The Security Council should be enlarged in both categories of membership by adding countries that play an important role in the global arena and in the United Nations framework. It is vital that an enlarged Council retain its effectiveness with regard to decision-making.

We intend to actively support the transition process in Iraq with a view to creating a secure, stable, united, prosperous and democratic country, in accordance with Security Council resolutions. As we declared at the International Conference on Iraq, held on 22 June 2005 in Brussels, Slovakia has decided to forgive $1.13 billion of Iraq's debt as a tangible contribution to that end. We are confident that the Iraqi people will use the October referendum to show their support for the new Constitution, and that democratic parliamentary elections will follow.

Stabilizing the western Balkans remains a priority on my country's foreign policy agenda. Slovakia has thus far supported the engagement of the United Nations in the region by participating in peacekeeping and stabilization missions in the Balkans. In our opinion, the pivotal issue with regard to the stabilization of the Western Balkans is the future status of Kosovo, which remains a potential element of instability in the region. We denounce all acts of violence and intolerance inside the province. We believe that the majority of Kosovars aspire to peace, democracy and development. In particular, we appreciate the activities of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Kai Eide.

Slovakia has been approved as the candidate of the Group of Eastern European States for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council in the elections to be held at this session of the General Assembly. Slovakia has never been a member of the Security Council, although it has taken an active part in United

Nations peacekeeping efforts through its participation in operations in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

If elected to membership in that important body, the Slovak Republic will enter the Security Council at a dynamic moment characterized by a changing global environment and by the search for a new security consensus. New threats to security represent growing challenges to the ability of the international system to maintain international peace and security. That development will therefore also be a challenge for our country in its capacity as a member of the Security Council, in particular because it will test our readiness to shoulder greater commitment and responsibility for stability and security around the world. I want to assure the Assembly that Slovakia is ready to take on this important assignment with honour and responsibility.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Slovak Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Democratic Republic

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Democratic Republic.

Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Democratic Republic, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Democratic Republic, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Ahmed: On behalf of the Republic of Somalia I am very pleased to address this summit here in New York marking the sixtieth anniversary of United Nations and the fifth anniversary of the Millennium Summit, which agreed on a number of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce poverty by 50 per cent by the year 2015. We believe that the eight MDGs are desirable and lofty ones, and we fully endorse them. Unfortunately, given the circumstances of conflict in Somalia, we are unlikely to attain all of them. However, we are confident that some progress will certainly be made.

With regard to the reform of the United Nations, Somalia has committed itself to the position taken by the African Union (AU) at Sirte, Libya.

I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Somalia's appreciation for, and approval of, the United Nations 60 years of progressive work to maintain peace while concurrently achieving incremental progress towards a more equitable and liveable world. The history of the United Nations involvement in Somalia is a good example of its invaluable role in helping the emerging nations of the world. Despite momentary setbacks, the United Nations has taken a laudable role at each juncture of Somalia's history, from colonialism to independence and throughout our nationhood.

Nothing better demonstrates the importance of the United Nations than the nurturing role it played during the sad days of our 15-year-long civil war. While assisting the destitute and providing safe sanctuary for an exodus of Somali refugees to neighbouring countries and elsewhere, the United Nations had the political will to invoke the morally compelling doctrine of humanitarian intervention, thereby successfully reversing a calamitous famine that could potentially have wiped out millions of Somalis.

Moreover, during the two years that the Somalia National Reconciliation Conference met at Nairobi, Kenya, the United Nations played a helpful role in successfully finding a lasting and comprehensive settlement to Somalia's political crisis. The current Transitional Federal Government of Somalia is the outcome of that political settlement. Allow me to restate here Somalia's indebtedness and profound appreciation to those who selflessly helped us during the Somali National Reconciliation Conference, as well as to those who continue to help us in our current pursuit of a peaceful and well-governed Somalia. Among others, special gratitude goes to the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, the League of Arab States and the European Union, as well as to the Government of Kenya, for patiently and generously hosting and paying for our long peace process.

With regard to relocating to Somalia, the nascent Transitional Federal Government could not just sit by and wait until the international community acted. It therefore took the daring unilateral initiative, on 13 June 2005, to relocate itself from Nairobi to Somalia with minimal help. To the dismay of most sceptics, the massive relocation scheme was completed without any incident. The entire Government is now on Somali soil. It is my judgement that we owe a status report to those who earnestly wanted to witness the rise of Somalia from the ashes. That report will also be useful to those who may continue to doubt the effectiveness of the Transitional Federal Government in extricating Somalia from its current predicament of chaos and lawlessness.

The Government has continued to tackle the daunting tasks inside Somalia at a much faster pace than the international community could have anticipated. What is significant here is that the Transitional Federal Government is being helped by a hidden hand that most observers and political analysts of Somalia have typically regarded as a wild card or a totally incalculable factor. They have never clearly understood the importance of correctly accounting for the level of popular support that the new Somali Government enjoyed upon relocating to Somalia. The high popularity of the Transitional Federal Government within Somalia turned out to be so strong that the Government owes its very survival to the admiration and active support it receives from the local population. That factor alone has proven to be more crucial to the survival of the Transitional Federal Government than any other form of assistance.

With the support of its citizens, the new Government has already proceeded to consolidate the gains and the outcome of the reconciliation process, with the aim of addressing the formidable expectations of the Somali people. As a result, I can confidently report to the Assembly today that our efforts at reclaiming Somalia from its lawlessness are already under way and have already produced concrete results on the ground.

The Government has made phenomenal progress in the little more than three months since its relocation. Progress has been made in the recruitment and training of a modest security force comprised of personnel from all of Somalia's regions; in the extension of State authority over much of Somalia; in winning the allegiance and support of regional leaders and the Somali public at large; in earning and assuming the moral leadership of the nation through responsible governance and peaceful means; and in creating overarching political momentum that powerfully augurs for the sure attainment of durable peace and continuity in Somalia.

Contrary to the fears some may have had, therefore, the advent of the Transitional Federal Government did not turn out to be some kind of cruel hoax or yet another false start for Somalia. The sensible actions undertaken by the new Government inside Somalia have already established its legitimacy and the kind of moral leadership it enjoys inside Somalia. The Government is serious and committed to the basic social contract it made with its citizens, namely, to guarantee peace and security to its people in return for the allegiance they have already conferred upon their Government.

There is clearly a unique chance for the Transitional Federal Government to restore normalcy, legitimacy and lasting peace to Somalia. Regrettably, however, the situation is not tenable in the long term. The challenges that are hampering the Government's efforts on the ground are all related to the indifference of the international community. We believe that the international community has a moral obligation to help the new Somali Government in its quest for peace, stability, territorial integrity and unity in the country in a manner consistent with the United Nations Charter. Now is the time when the international community must assist Somalia in a strong and decisive manner by addressing the following three challenges.

One of the challenges for the new Government is that most of the international community has yet to honour its obligations with regard to ensuring a peaceful and well-governed Somalia. Even much of its initial cheerful pledges to provide material and financial support to the Government have yet to reach us. Consequently, its actual role in our efforts on the ground remain very confusing to us. We do not understand the new ambivalence of the international community, which seems to have moderated its initial enthusiasm to offer Somalia a consolidated rapid assistance programme.

In order to address that situation, the international community must help Somalia by providing the necessary financial and political support for the rapid rehabilitation of infrastructures to house the new

Government, to provide for budgetary and other administrative expenditures, and to tackle the security issues such as recruiting a national police force, pacification programmes and the implementation of demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes.

Another puzzling and more serious problem for the new Government of Somalia is the United Nations arms embargo on Somalia. The embargo directly undermines the Government's genuine efforts to form a national security force — to which it has an inherent right in order to protect the public and keep the peace by enforcing law and order throughout Somalia. In addition, it discourages friendly countries that are willing to offer help to Somalia from doing so, especially in the areas of security and the rule of law. Moreover, the embargo has delayed the formal deployment of the African peace support mission in Somalia, whose mandate is to protect the Government and its premises during its capacity-building stage as well as to help the Government form and train national security forces.

It does not make sense to help Somalis reach a comprehensive political settlement of their long conflict while at the same time denying them the ability to build the institutions through which they can overcome lawlessness in their country. With the creation of the new Government and its relocation to Somalia, the political conditions and realities that prompted the United Nations to impose an arms embargo no longer prevail. Whose interests and purposes does the embargo continue to serve now that there is a legitimate Government functioning in Somalia? In the same vein, in reflecting on the absurd position of a nation or Government whose capacity to institute its own law enforcement bodies is neutralized, one wonders what the political or moral relevance of keeping Somalia handcuffed by the old embargo can possibly be? To address that predicament we call on the Security Council to assist the efforts of the Transitional Federal Government to stabilize the country by reviewing the merits of the arms embargo on Somalia and promptly lifting it.

Finally, the disintegration of the State and the absence of law and order have led to widespread criminal activity by individuals and groups for financial gain, including by war profiteers and terrorists. Those individuals and groups believe that the status quo in Somalia favours them, and they will therefore do whatever they can to resist the return of law and order to Somalia, including by renewing active hostilities. To address that possible scenario the United Nations must establish punitive and targeted sanctions against those who try to spoil Somalia's chance for lasting peace by undermining the ongoing efforts to pacify the country and by frustrating the effectiveness of the Government in upholding the primacy of the rule of law.

The cost of the prolonged Somali civil war is enormous in terms of its direct social, economic, political and environmental impacts. There is now clearly a rare chance for my country to overcome those negative impacts. The performance of the Transitional Federal Government on the ground and the overall political environment in Somalia are very promising. Both Africa and the region have been very forthcoming in helping Somalia. It is imperative that the rest of the international community extend its help to Somalia by adopting the three proposals just outlined, thereby effectively ending the plight of Somalia once and for all.

Allow me here to make my personal appeal to the world summit not to leave Somalia out in the cold in this crucial period of its pacification and nation-building. While many of the countries of the world are struggling to meet their Millennium Development Goals, Somalia is struggling to stand on its feet. It would be grave negligence on the part of the international community if it fails to fulfil its obligations towards Somalia in a timely and decisive manner.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Democratic Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed, President of the Transitional Federal Government of the Somali Democratic Republic, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay.

Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Vázquez (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to extend the sincerest condolences of the people and Government of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay to the victims of Hurricane Katrina, as well as to all the citizens of the world, men and women, old and young, who are victims of natural disasters, of the fury of nature, which is showing us that it will no longer be abused by mankind.

I come from Uruguay, a small South American country, whose main wealth is its vocation for peace, its drive for freedom and the democratic commitment that its people have been forging for generations.

I convey the greetings of the people and Government of Uruguay to this forum, which is the broadest, most representative and most important forum in the world today. It is a greeting that is demanding, committed and hopeful.

The greeting is demanding because we are living at a very particular time in the history of mankind. In fact, at very few moments in history have we seen circumstances so rich in paradoxes and so poor in paradigms as the present one. Never before has mankind had at its disposal such scientific and technological progress and such a significant cultural heritage to guarantee a life in dignity. However, never before has mankind suffered so much inequality, intolerance and uncertainty.

We know that we have reached this point, but we are uncertain about where we are heading. We cannot be passive witnesses to the situation; no one can wash his hands of his own problems nor of problems that seem remote. We cannot resign ourselves to a future that is an unchanging extension of the present. There is no reason whatsoever to give up the hope of a utopia, without which darkness could be our fate.

Our greeting is committed because we all bear the responsibility, which we cannot abdicate, of being the masters of our own lives and the architects of our own futures. This task is a road on which neither privileges nor condemnations are allowed; we are all travelling on an equal footing. Nor does this road permit shortcuts. History is neither a gallery of national heroes nor a calendar of outstanding events: history is made by people day by day.

In this context, we upon whom our peoples have conferred the task of governing have a very demanding responsibility ahead of us. And that is because governing means managing with efficiency and transparency: it means articulating in a democratic fashion this rich and complex network that is society. But to govern means also to envisage the future and to call upon people to build that future among all and for all.

Our greeting is hopeful as well. Although we do not overlook the risks, the difficulties and the limits within the national, regional and global contexts, we believe in human beings, we believe in society. We believe in democracy as a means to govern but also as a human impulse and as a state of society.

Although I said this during our statement at the High-level Plenary Meeting which took place in this same Hall a few hours ago, I wish to reiterate before the Assembly that the Eastern Republic of Uruguay reaffirms the principles that have characterized its foreign policy.

First is the firm commitment to peace, sovereignty, democracy and solidarity. When I speak about peace, democracy, solidarity and freedom I would like to recall that six days ago marked the thirty-second anniversary of the occasion when a man gave his life defending peace, democracy and freedom. I would like thus to pay tribute to Salvador Allende.

The second principle is the firm rejection of any kind of terrorism, violence and discrimination. The third is the inalienable right of every State to safe and stable borders and to be completely free to exercise its sovereignty and self-determination, and fourth is respect for international law as the best guarantee of the sovereignty of peoples and their peaceful coexistence.

The fifth principle is non-alignment and non-intervention in affairs that come under the domestic jurisdiction of States. Sixthly, we reaffirm multilateralism as a means to strengthen international law, enhancing the role of the United Nations. Seventh, we acknowledge the indivisibility of all human rights, be they political, social, economic, civil or cultural, including those of a collective nature such as the right to development and to a safe environment.

In conformity with these principles, Uruguay first of all deems it necessary to move forward with the reforms that will allow the United Nations to fully fulfil its commitments. Because such reforms are of a complex nature, they should be undertaken with a sense of history and with political will, and without hegemonic intentions.

Secondly, Uruguay renews its commitment to the Millennium Goals, which in our country means the design and implementation of a system of integrated and global social policies that address the poverty and destitution suffered by almost one million Uruguayans and that, at the same time, are part of a strategy of change and development.

Thirdly, Uruguay reiterates its will to continue participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations and will contribute its efforts to improving the security and the conditions of service of those missions.

We also express our support for the Secretary-General's initiative to create a Peace Commission, to which, we believe, Uruguay could contribute, continuing its support for peacekeeping missions and the expertise acquired in rebuilding devastated countries.

There is no peace in intolerance and terrorism, no freedom in poverty, and no democracy in inequality. It is crucial to reject every expression of violence, but before rejecting it, it must be avoided by attacking its roots.

This is quite simply because every human being, simply by being human, has the right to live in dignity. Societies where there is a contrast between an opulent few and a neglected majority are not prosperous. Societies where to be born is a problem, to be young is suspect, to get an education and a job is a privilege and to grow old is a curse have no future. This is the way we see it in Uruguay. We have learned this from those generations that preceded us in building a country that, though it has its own unique features, is not atypical of nor alien to the Latin American context.

While it is true that the first half of the last century was a favourable period for Uruguay, it is also true that — due to a combination of external circumstances and domestic structural weaknesses — the last fifty years were a period of economic deterioration, impoverishment and even an institutional breakdown in 1973.

We Uruguayans regained democracy in 1985, and the current Government, which took office exactly 200 days ago, is working hard to heal the wounds dictatorship caused through human rights violations. We are not hostages to the past, but Uruguayan society needs to know the truth about what happened to ensure that never again will it happen — never again.

Nevertheless, with the commitments that we have assumed to Uruguayan society — whose will is our mandate — the Government of which I am head is promoting changes: changes which are necessary, possible, responsible and gradual, changes with political and social support, changes that do not overlook reality but do not give up on the dream of a Uruguay with human development, with productive economic growth and with a safe environment, a Uruguay fully integrated into its own region and into the international arena. We are not starting from scratch, but we have a lot to do to achieve this utopia, the dream of which motivates us as a nation.

In conclusion, this is exactly what I wished to convey to members on behalf of the Government and the people of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay: far away, in the forgotten southern part of South America, there is a country that does not resign itself to difficulties, that is building its own destiny and that, faithful to its tradition, wishes to join in building a better world, working alongside all our dear brethren, the citizens of the world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Tabaré Vázquez, President of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Address by Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations His Excellency Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Obiang Nguema Mbasogo (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is participating in this debate with hope and optimism that we will see the United Nations system strengthened once again so that it can effectively carry out its mission as the centre of global equilibrium in order to attain the objectives established at its creation in 1945.

Indeed, the United Nations was created to defend and promote the rights of persons and the dignity, freedom and equality of human beings. The United Nations was created to promote the equality of all nations, mutual respect, solidarity and the promotion of cooperation among States on an equal footing and for mutual benefit. Another of the objectives established was to promote the global development of nations through a just and equitable economic system that would protect the interests of all countries, rich or poor.

The United Nations must be given the international authority it needs to establish peace, order and stability in the world, serving as a centre of universal equilibrium with the capacity to resolve conflicts arising among States. Force must be used only in conformity with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, with the prior consent of its competent bodies, because the undue use of force can disrupt international peace and security in an unforeseeable manner.

We hope that the United Nations system will be the inspiration for a democratic culture and for human rights, serving as a model and guide for the internal organization of its Members. We therefore support the creation of a Human Rights Council that will be very closely involved with human-rights-related issues in each country and that will have relevant competencies to support the affected countries with regard to the decisions and recommendations of the Economic and Social Council.

The democratization of societies and good governance are concepts universally accepted by States. Therefore, there is no need to adopt coercive mechanisms against any State to ensure their implementation. All that is needed is to assist and guide each State as to how it should assimilate democratic concepts in accordance with its economic, social and cultural realities.

For all those reasons, we believe that, 60 years after the Organization's founding, the social and political circumstances that prevailed in 1945 have lost their validity because of the very dynamics of the development of modern societies. Today, we are in the best possible position to rethink the responsibilities of the United Nations and its Members in the light of the aforementioned objectives, bearing in mind today's circumstances and the experience accumulated in the 60 years of its existence.

We recognize that the task is very difficult and complex, taking into account the various interests that converge as we consider reforming the entire United Nations system. That is why we congratulate you, Mr. President, on the confidence that the international community has placed in you and in your Government to moderate this important debate. We hope that your skill and professional experience will be put to good use so that we can attain our objectives.

We believe that in this effort, we must give priority to the spirit of democracy and the interests of humankind, because democracy, as the expression of the popular will, and compliance with consensual norms both involve respect for the collective will. We also believe that the United Nations could not impose order and justice on a human community dominated by the various cultural, economic and political interests of its Member States without recourse to the democratic principles to which all of us are bound. In that connection, the Security Council, as the organ that must demand universal compliance with its decisions, must be the first to act under democratic criteria.

For my country, the needed reform of the Security Council does not involve an increase in its membership or, even less, an expansion of the right of

the veto. We must examine the reasons for the Security Council's failure since its creation in 1945. In fact, if there is something that should be done to reform the Security Council, it is to simply revoke the right of the veto enjoyed by some of its members as a concept that was created only because of the conflict between two opposing ideological systems within the United Nations system. The veto has never allowed the consensus or majority sovereign expression of the Security Council; it has served only as a way in which to block the popular will so as to protect the interests of the Power exercising the veto.

In the present circumstances of a unipolar world, we do not see the need to exercise the veto in this United Nations body. Many just resolutions have been vetoed despite the fact that they have sought the common good, and we have seen the negative results. If the veto must be maintained in the Security Council because of interests, we ask that Africa also have that right, because, like any other regional group, that continent has many interests to defend.

When the Security Council is democratized we ask that its decisions be binding and that those who do not comply with them be properly sanctioned. This would give teeth to its decisions. Non-compliance with the principles and resolutions adopted by United Nations bodies creates impunity unless disciplinary measures are taken against those who are in breach of them.

In this regard, Equatorial Guinea strongly regrets the failure to take measures against the terrorists who tried to overthrow the established constitutional Government on 6 March 2004 despite identification of nationalities of the terrorists and despite Equatorial Guinea's request to the Governments concerned.

The United Nations must clearly define the phenomenon of terrorism and in so doing avoid confusion with what is interpreted as legitimate armed intervention. Humanitarian intervention cannot be carried out on the basis of an individual interpretation, but rather must be justified by the competent institutions of the United Nations system.

Questions related to organized transnational crime, such as terrorism and mercenary activities, must be the subject of a special session of the General Assembly to deal with criminal acts such as those of 11 September in New York, 11 March in Madrid and events in London, Russia, Morocco, Tanzania, Kenya and the mercenary attack in Equatorial Guinea and to adopt measur that can avert the loss of innocent life.

In Equatori Guinea, the integration of women into our development process is receiving the Government's utmost attention through the design of literacy programmes for them and their gradual integration in economic activities and political institutions with a specific percentage reserved for women.

Lastly, we want environmental problems, whose effects are of unforeseeable magnitude in each State, to be addressed with due sensitivity, respect and solidarity, in the same way as questions of world peace and security.

We reaffirm that the primary responsibility for promoting sustainable development in each country resides directly with the Government concerned. Multilateral and bilateral assistance only complement the efforts of States themselves and provide guidance for what must be accomplished internally by each country.

Among these efforts, Equatorial Guinea supports the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative proposed by the United Kingdom. Nonetheless, we believe that transparency must be required not only of Governments but also of the economic players that control these industries. It is, therefore, necessary that an international monitoring body be established to intervene in the activities of both Governments and economic enterprises.

We welcome the report submitted for the Assembly's consideration as it contains important recommendations, above all regarding the development programme.

I wish to conclude by calling for greater solidarity and a spirit of commitment from all the Members of the United Nations so that we can make this Organization an ideological model that serves the aspirations of present and future generations.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Item 9 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

General debate

Address by Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming Her Excellency Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, and inviting her to address the General Assembly.

Ms. Zia (Bangladesh) (*spoke in Bangla; English text provided by the delegation*): I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. I am confident that you will carry forward the able legacy left by your predecessor, Mr. Jean Ping. Our warm tribute is also due to the Secretary-General as he strives to reinvigorate our Organization.

We meet in the wake of the High-level Plenary Meeting, where bold decisions were made to promote implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Our problems transcend national boundaries. Solutions need a global consensus. All of us must emphatically reaffirm the central role of the United Nations in the cooperative management of the world's problems.

We are constitutionally committed to uphold the Charter and its legitimacy based on the rule of law. In a globalizing world, no nation is an island. None can prosper alone. The United Nations remains the only bastion of peace, justice and development in the world.

Reform of the United Nations is vital. We must focus on its effectiveness and ability to deliver quickly. Its agenda and mandate must be meaningful. Its administration must be reformed. Its budget must be purged of waste. Its major organs need to be reconstituted and revitalized to serve purposeful priorities. Expansion of its major organs is necessary but must be tailored to the efficacy of the Organization.

The dynamics of today's world have been created by immense forces of change. Among them are advances in science and technology and widespread awareness of individual rights. The resulting globalization and progression of humanitarian law have given rise to a world where the very concept of sovereignty is being challenged, where the dimensions of security are in a flux, where the nature of conflict has seen a seismic shift and where social exclusion has added complex uncertainty. The need for constructive engagement, dialogue, tolerance and understanding is imperative. Development and the rule of law must take centre stage.

New challenges confront us today. While terrorists sow panic and xenophobia in our societies, deprivation, hunger, disease and environmental degradation continue to fuel insecurity and destabilization. The recent bombings in London and Egypt shocked us all. They have hardened our resolve to face this menace unitedly. Bangladesh condemns terrorism in all its forms. We have acceded to all anti-terrorism conventions of the United Nations and relevant regional organizations. We support the early conclusion of a comprehensive United Nations convention on terrorism. I would like to underscore our conviction that terrorists do not belong to any one country or religion.

In Bangladesh, sustained efforts are being made to pursue the twin objectives of responsibility at home and a contribution abroad. Despite enormous constraints, we have made good progress to advance democracy, development and human rights. We recognize that those goals are linked with one another.

We have moved slowly but surely to shore up a democratic ethos. The late President Ziaur Rahman led Bangladesh out of the morass of a failed democracy in 1975. He introduced a multi-party system, freed the press and opened up the economy. In 1990, a popular uprising against an entrenched military dictatorship brought the first real push towards sustained democracy. We have not looked back. Three consecutive free and fair elections have been held under a neutral caretaker Government. That unique constitutional innovation has ensured the peaceful transfer of power on an alternating basis. Democracy has become firmly rooted in Bangladesh. A key element of the last election, in 2001, was the participation of more than 70 per cent of the electorate. Women voters outnumbered men. They voted not for symbols but for issues.

A quiet revolution is under way in Bangladesh in the field of development. The progress is visible on six key fronts: stable growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) at a rate of 5 per cent or more for over two decades; higher per capita income; food security; increased resilience in the face of natural disasters; improvement of the human development index; and better social and health outcomes. Our performance in those areas compares favourably with the results in our own region and elsewhere. A set of pragmatic, targeted policy approaches have made that progress possible. We have completed a full-fledged poverty reduction strategy paper through an extended consultative process. It sets out a road map to meet country-specific MDGs. The fundamental principle of the poverty reduction strategy paper is to promote employment-generating economic growth and to invest significantly in priority sectors such as education, health and social safety-net programmes. It is a matter of some satisfaction that Bangladesh has achieved two of the MDGs: the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary schools and access to safe drinking water. We are close to achieving two more goals: the reduction of extreme poverty and under-five child mortality rates.

Bangladesh is committed to upholding the dignity of individuals and promoting human rights. Bangladesh is a party to all United Nations human rights conventions. We are moving steadily to strengthen good governance through strong democratic institutions, establish the rule of law and eliminate intolerance in our society.

Deeply entrenched pockets of poverty continue to exist around the world. The most vulnerable are the least developed countries. Their products should be granted immediate duty-free and quota-free access globally. As reaffirmed at Monterrey, the specific allocation of 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of the GDP of developed countries must be earmarked for official development assistance to least developed countries. Financing for development is a critical issue. Innovative initiatives in that regard, which have been the subject of discussion, need to be pursued in earnest.

The devastation caused by natural disasters affects all countries, rich and poor alike. How can we meet the challenge of effective relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction, as well as pre-disaster warning and preparations? That continues to the responsibility of the United Nations.

We are profoundly shocked at the huge toll of damage caused by Hurricane Katrina on the Gulf coast of the United States. Natural disasters do not distinguish between rich and poor countries, and the human misery and suffering caused are the same. We, in Bangladesh, have weathered many severe floods and cyclones, and the toll in terms of life and property has been huge. We can therefore feel the torment that the affected people have undergone, and we offer our heartfelt sympathies. We know that the American people can overcome the disaster and move on with their lives.

All countries, including Bangladesh, must seek ways and means to contribute effectively to the United Nations, whether through peacemaking, peacekeeping or peacebuilding. Active participation, innovative ideas and best practices in shoring up development together can enhance our combined capacity to address the world's problems, especially those that no one country can tackle alone. We, in Bangladesh, are particularly proud of our contribution to peacekeeping on many simultaneous fronts across the globe. In all, we have contributed more than 39,000 troops to 24 missions and are currently among the largest contributors. Sixty-seven of our blue-helmeted soldiers have died in that cause. Our commitment to peacekeeping remains unflinching. We also fully support the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission.

A priority concern for us is our close identity with Africa. Through our peacekeeping efforts, we have established special bonds of friendship. The New Partnership for Africa's Development is particularly encouraging. We believe that South-South cooperation has specific relevance in that context.

Bangladesh reaffirms its support for the early establishment of a sovereign independent State in Palestine, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions. The road map for peace in the Middle East needs to be implemented fully and urgently.

With respect to Iraq, we believe that the present situation should be resolved by preserving the interests of the Iraqi people, in particular their territorial integrity, and by ensuring the long-term peace, security and stability of the region.

Bangladesh's constitutional commitment to general and complete disarmament is the reason for our progressive support of international and regional

treaties and agreements covering all the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC) weapons. We are a party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We give precedence to human over weapons security.

Each year we come to the Assembly to reaffirm our faith in the United Nations. This sixtieth anniversary year is of profound significance. We must provide a renewed mandate to the United Nations to meet the challenges of the new millennium — to rid the world of poverty and injustice, to usher in the rule of law, to promote the cause of development, to eradicate terrorism and, above all, to promote peace and security. We can prevail only if we act responsibly and together. Support for the United Nations and its legitimacy remains a paramount priority.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for the statement she has just made.

Begum Khaleda Zia, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, was escorted from the rostrum.

Address by Mr. Jean-Paul Proust, Secretary of State of the Principality of Monaco

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Secretary of State of the Principality of Monaco.

Mr. Jean-Paul Proust, Secretary of State of the Principality of Monaco, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Jean-Paul Proust, Secretary of State of the Principality of Monaco, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Proust (Monaco) (*spoke in French*): In 1945, in the aftermath of a war that tore apart all the peoples of the world — a war during which the most basic human rights were violated — a few leading countries came together at the San Francisco Conference, here in the United States of America, and created the United Nations. Collective security had to be restored, human rights had to be reinstated and our world needed to move towards greater justice and freedom.

Much has been achieved over the past 60 years. Today, our Organization consists of 191 Member States. We hope — and many heads of State or Government expressed this wish during the recent summit — that we are beginning a new phase in the quest for collective security and respect for human rights and in the fight against poverty and disease, which continue to affect so many peoples.

To that end, the international community must be better represented, particularly in the Security Council. Further progress must also be made through the establishment of the Human Rights Council, the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to combat poverty and the more efficient management of the Organization.

Once again, on behalf of His Serene Highness Prince Albert II, I wish to pay tribute to the President of the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session and to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency at the sixtieth session. I hope that, throughout our debates at this session, the momentum for change will continue to build. I would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has pursued those noble objectives with tenacity and farsightedness.

The Principality of Monaco fully endorses the outcome document, and will support its implementation so that we can, together, achieve new progress in the coming months.

The Government of the Principality of Monaco has, over the past few years, reoriented its international cooperation policy in order to contribute more effectively to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Thus, the main focus of Monaco's cooperation policies are those defined in the framework of the Millennium Development Goals: the preservation of the environment in the broad sense of the term; the fight against poverty; and support for education and health care.

Monaco's official development assistance (ODA) has continued to increase, multiplying fivefold in the past 10 years — an effort that will continue in the years to come with a view to reaching the 0.7 per cent target as soon as possible. Likewise, we endorse the Declaration on innovative sources of financing for development.

Through its voluntary contributions to the United Nations and several other institutions and agencies,

including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNICEF, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, to name but a few, the Principality sponsors activities aimed at assisting developing countries and the most underprivileged populations.

Over one third of our cooperation funding is provided within the framework of multilateral assistance, and the increase over the past few years has, of course, also benefited bilateral assistance.

The General Assembly proclaimed 2005 as the International Year of Microcredit in an effort to promote such programmes globally. The Principality has, for many years, accorded special attention to microcredit, as part of our financing for development programme, in particular through its cooperation with UNDP. In this regard, funds provided by Monaco provide support for small businesses in Africa that are operating under conditions of extreme poverty, with a view to improving the standard of living of the most vulnerable people, particularly women.

Our cooperation efforts are directed mostly towards the countries of the Mediterranean region and the least developed countries in Africa, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa, because we also believe that we need to open up spaces for regional solidarity throughout the world.

The Mediterranean is an ecoregion with which the Principality has, historically, been closely involved. The implementation of cooperation plans to protect the Mediterranean environment, both coastal and marine, is therefore a priority.

Monaco also provides assistance to a number of French-speaking countries in areas relating largely to poverty eradication, health care and education. Working in complementarity with the Government, Monaco's non-governmental organizations are also committed in those countries. I would like to underscore that the Principality is ready to participate, to the best of its abilities and within its financial means, in initiatives in the areas of health care and training.

During his recent address from this rostrum, Prince Albert II expressed great sadness in connection with the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina in the United States.

Almost one year ago, South-East Asia suffered an unprecedented natural disaster. The solidarity shown in the aftermath of that tragedy and the effectiveness of the response to it, on the part of not only humanitarian workers but also civil society, make it clear that the resources and the capacity do exist to allow for shared responsibility for the future welfare of the peoples to whom the Charter is dedicated. The Principality of Monaco has mobilized its efforts by undertaking a great many private and public activities in this respect.

The Principality of Monaco has always been a staunch defender of humanitarian law. We support in principle and on the basis of our convictions any action aimed at alleviating difficult situations resulting from natural or manmade disasters.

The Principality of Monaco is a small State that enjoys a certain level of wealth. It cannot change the world on its own, but it intends to set an example in the field of cooperation.

The creation of the Human Rights Council and the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission will mark a turning point in the history of the Organization. Even more importantly, they represent a response to developments in multilateral relations.

In keeping with the document just adopted, the General Assembly will also have to strengthen the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; establish the rule of law assistance unit within the Secretariat; and work constructively to ensure that the emerging concept of responsibility to protect becomes positive law as soon as possible.

In this regard, I would insist on the imperative need to put an end to impunity for crimes committed against children.

The defence of the rights and interests of children has always been one of our major concerns. Indeed, any act of violence against a child is a violation of the lofty principles for which the United Nations stands. In order to build "a world fit for children", in compliance with the measures adopted during the special session of the General Assembly on children, held in May 2002, the Government of the Principality is deeply dedicated to promoting the concept that there should be no statute of limitations for the most serious violations of the rights of children, and that we should expand the

powers of national jurisdictions by providing them with universal competence in that area.

Prince Albert II, during his address to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, invited the international community to give thought to a plan to address the impunity that continues to prevail with regard to the most heinous crimes committed against children.

In that context, the Principality has stressed the promotion of that concept in the resolution on the Rights of the Child, adopted last year by the General Assembly, and it has reaffirmed its position during the session of the Human Rights Commission held last April in Geneva. It is the wish of the Principality to pursue its undertaking with the support of the international community on those crucial matters.

In other respects, the Monegasque Government has paid close attention and contributed financially to the global study on violence against children led by Professor Pinheiro, which will present its conclusions in October 2006. Likewise, the Principality actively participated, along with the European Council, in the triennial programme of action — for the period 2005-2007 — entitled "Childhood and violence", whose conclusions, like that of the global study on violence against children, will enable us to make specific recommendations to States. The Principality of Monaco will always support all international initiatives aimed at enhancing the protection of children.

Respect for the environment is also one of our concerns. Mr. President, it was in your country, Sweden, just over three decades ago that environmental law was born. The Stockholm Conference saw the emergence of a discipline that met a need: to address the protection of natural resources and of our environment in an organized manner.

Furthermore, we have decided to join the Kyoto Protocol, and we hope, in the tradition of the Oceanographic Institute — created 100 years ago by Prince Albert I of Monaco — to make our contribution to studies on the future of our planet.

However, the United Nations Environment Programme is no longer the ideal forum to coordinate action and ensure its effectiveness because of the extremely rapid expansion of this field and given the many conventions, protocols and agreements that have been adopted. That is why we support the idea of creating a United Nations environmental body.

Globalization must not make us forget that we come from different regions and cultures that should enrich one another and not be a source of clashes or of conflicts.

We believe in interaction between the United Nations and regional organizations; one sets the general rules, and the others facilitate their implementation at the local level.

The reforms just adopted at the High-level Plenary Meeting strengthen the unique position of the General Assembly as the guarantor of the system's coherence.

I can assure the Assembly that Monaco will continue resolutely to make its contribution, however modest, to building a better world, with full respect for our differences.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Secretary of State of the Principality of Monaco for the statement he has just made.

Address by His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq

The President: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq.

Mr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, was escorted to the rostrum.

The President: I have great pleasure in welcoming His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Al-Jaafari (Iraq) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I wish first of all to express my sincerest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I wish you success in performing this historic and humanitarian mission in the best interests of humanity at large. I wish also to express my appreciation to Mr. Jean Ping for his efforts in the framework of that same mission and goals during the previous session of the Assembly.

I come from Iraq, the cradle of civilization, a meeting place for a variety of nationalities, religions, creeds and political ideas. I come from a rich and

fertile land which has throughout its honourable past given the blood of its children, such as Al-Hussein and subsequently Al-Sadr, to protect freedom and human rights.

This is a unique opportunity for me to make heard the strong voice of Iraq. The dictatorship that ruled Iraq in the past tried to silence that voice by sowing death and destruction. Mass graves testify to that. Today it is the terrorists who are trying to silence that voice. I have come here to deliver to the Assembly a message from my nation, to convey the real picture of the new Iraq that is emerging, the power of its determination and its profound love and feelings towards all other nations.

Iraq is now dealing with various new realities. Today — released from the restraints of a 35-year dictatorship that imposed on Iraq one political, security, media and economic option and engendered a real Calvary of suffering for its people — Iraq is witnessing a different, multifaceted reality. Throughout that period of great suffering and while the world stood idly by, all kinds of crimes and suppression were committed against Iraqis, Iraqi wealth and resources, the environment, education, the justice system, culture and civilization.

With the recent successful conclusion of our political journey — in record time and in spite of all the obstacles and challenges facing it — the Iraqi people can justly be proud of their country and identity today. Beginning with the elections on 30 January 2005 and the formation of the Government on 3 May, and despite all the challenges faced over the past three months, a draft constitution was written and will be presented to the Iraqi people for a vote on 15 October. That referendum will allow the Iraqi people to express its will and allow it to constitutionally establish the rule of law and to create a State in which there is equality for all Iraqis.

The constitution will allow law and order, justice and equality for all Iraqis. Iraqi women will be able to participate actively in political life and will have their rights restored, including the same right that men have to pass on their nationality to their children. The constitution grants religious freedom, freedom of speech, and the right to federal and regional autonomy.

We are marching resolutely towards political stability and economic prosperity and regaining security and stability. While there were 61 terrorist car bombings in July, that number dropped to nine in August and September. Likewise, the number of assassinations decreased from 225 to nine in the past two months.

On 9 September the Iraqi military attacked terrorist hubs in Talafar to restore security and stability there. Our forces adhered to strict rules of conduct, doing their best to protect innocent civilians in that town. Feeling the force of that operation, the terrorists fled to commit more crimes — this time in the brave and heroic city of Khadimiya, where over 160 civilians were killed on 14 September.

The Iraqi forces continue to build, to train and to be equipped so that they can take control of all internal security matters and do not have to depend on the multinational forces for their security. However, even though some Iraqi cities are already prepared for it, the time has not come for the Iraqi forces to be completely independent. When we are ready and self-sufficient, we will ask the multinational forces to leave our cities.

The new political life in Iraq is committed to freedom of the press, freedom of expression, the separation of the legislative, executive, and judiciary powers and the reconstruction of Iraq, as well as to realize the aspirations of the Iraqi people to development and progress. Oil production and exports have increased along with the number of employment opportunities, income and trade exchange for Iraqis. More is being accomplished in public services and in health care and ambitious projects are under way to reconstruct our infrastructure, especially in the areas of home and road construction. Environmental bureaux have now declared the Iraqi provinces to be free from radioactivity.

I therefore seize this opportunity to urge creditor nations to help us by cancelling Iraqi debt or loans. That debt was accumulated under the corrupt policies of the previous regime and the Iraqi people have had no hand in it.

For Iraq to recover its role in the international community and to participate effectively in defending international peace and security and to combat the evil scourge of terrorism, it must be allowed to rebuild and to implement plans for the development, rehabilitation and the rebuilding of its infrastructure. I call on the donor countries to meet their commitments undertaken at different international conferences, including in

Madrid, Brussels and, most recently, Jordan, to provide financial aid to Iraq.

Iraq would like to pay tribute to the constructive role of the United Nations in its special efforts to help the Iraqi people through the special envoy of the Secretary-General and the technical election assistance team. While we highly appreciate those efforts, we are also looking forward to having the United Nations return to Iraq and reopen its offices and agencies in order to support the reconstruction and development process.

We also call upon the international community to evaluate the need to adopt an international programme to protect and preserve the fine cultural and archaeological heritage and shrines of Iraq, whose cities are steeped in history, from Sumer and Babylon to the present.

Today, Iraq is both a witness to and a victim of the cruel, vicious and merciless attacks of international terrorists, who began their global campaign on 11 September 2001. Alarm bells are ringing in different capitals around the world — in Spain, Britain, Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia — as we have all witnessed. Iraq was afflicted with that scourge under Saddam's regime, whose policy was to rule or destroy people and property with all types of lethal weapons. Today the Iraqi people are paying the price of countering terrorism, because it is their homes that are on the frontlines of the battle. The world must support Iraqis in fighting the war against terrorism and the remnants of the Baath regime so that it can move towards democracy.

In order to deal effectively and radically with terrorism, we must agree on a definition of a number of elements that are closely related to it, including suicide and the culture of terrorism, the financing of terrorism, advocacy and propaganda that attempt to legitimize terrorism, perpetrators of terrorist acts and State terrorism.

No country is free of terrorism today. Any country can be a victim of terrorism at any time. We all face this common threat. It brooks no boundaries; the geography of terrorism envelopes all humanity. We must therefore lend a hand to those who are paying the price of terrorism and to its victims. Because of the interdependence of nations, what happens in one country cannot fail to have repercussions in others. There is also a need to draw a distinction between natural disasters and terrorist disasters caused by man. The former are often uncontrollable. When they occur the entire world mobilizes to provide assistance to the affected countries, as we witnessed in the case of last December's Asian tsunami and the recent Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana. But the calamities of terrorism, if allowed, will be as devastating as natural disasters. We need to raise awareness and work together to put an end to terrorism and to alleviate its destructive impact.

In this regard, we want to express our warmest thanks to the people of the United States and to all the other peoples who have supported us. We must join efforts to triumph over terrorism, because those who win this victory will be able to help others as well. The Iraqi people are in the forefront of the counter-terrorism struggle. Why do those countries that send suicide bombers not send their young people to do humanitarian work to contribute to the reconstruction of Iraq instead of sending them to kill children, to destabilize Iraq and its security? Why do they not send funds to invest in Iraq, so that the common interests of our peoples and theirs may be achieved and so that the stay of the multinational forces may be shortened? Why do the news agencies in these countries not relay the achievements of the new Iraq and convey the real picture of the terrorist offensive, which targets popular markets and civilian gatherings, instead of inciting media reports that distort facts and falsify realities? But prior to that, we call upon neighbouring countries to stand by our people and prevent terrorists from entering Iraq, and to commit themselves to protecting our common borders for the safety and well-being of our peoples. We seek to establish the best possible relations with all countries, especially neighbouring ones, in order to promote the best interests of all and to safeguard national sovereignty and protect it from any foreign interference.

I would like now to touch on the most important political problems and the need for these problems to be resolved peacefully in accordance with international agreements and treaties. We call for a fair and just solution to the political problems in the Middle East, and in particular the Palestinian question, so that this region and all regions of the world will be free from weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons. We also must affirm the legitimate right of the Palestinian people to establish a sovereign State, ensuring them a life of dignity lived in freedom in a climate of peace in their own territory. We must all work to spread the

culture of love, peace and coexistence instead of the culture of hatred, war, vindictiveness and terrorism.

Iraq, whose children aspire to political, economic, security and developmental reconstruction, wants fully to assume its responsibility, both regional and international, to safeguard peace and security throughout the region and in the world. Iraq pays tribute to the United Nations, which has provided the world with a broad umbrella to prevent wars and resolve conflicts. The world today is constantly changing, and this requires dynamic changes in the structure, decision-making and working methods of the United Nations so it can cope with new world realities and meet its obligations. Iraq is undergoing difficult times, but its aspirations are just and we therefore hope that you will give Iraq your support and that you will display solidarity with Iraq, especially as we are on the verge of adopting our permanent constitution, a constitution that can ensure independence and a life of democracy, coexistence, love and tolerance for all.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Ibrahim al-Jaafari, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, was escorted from the rostrum.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Ms. Laila Freivalds, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. Freivalds (Sweden): A small boy on the run remains vividly in my mind today, a boy with eyes that have seen more horror than most of us in this Hall have ever seen, a boy whom all of us have failed.

There are thousands of children like him in Darfur. I met him when I visited areas of fear, suffering, hunger and senseless violence. We owe that boy in Darfur more: better performance; a stronger connection between our declarations and our actions.

We have tools to prevent armed conflicts. We have made many commitments to end oppression, radically reduce poverty and protect our environment. We have cures for many of the diseases that continue to kill. The challenge before us is to use instruments for peace, development and human rights, and to transform our commitments into real action.

Cooperation across borders is not just a good idea — it is a must. And for the truly global challenges, the United Nations is indispensable. Our joint commitment to the Charter of the United Nations is an excellent starting point But as new threats emerge and the world evolves, the United Nations must also adapt.

We need a multilateralism that is effective, with institutions that have teeth and a strong political will to make them work. We need a multilateralism that is based on common principles, not on the lowest common denominator of the day. We need a rule-based international order, applicable to all.

This is a crucial year for the United Nations. The Secretary-General has, with great courage and vision, led the way. The outcome of the summit sets the direction. This session of the General Assembly has been given the responsibility of following up on important decisions. We must together achieve real results in a number of areas. Let me highlight some of the main challenges.

The first challenge is to make progress on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Millions of people still suffer from extreme poverty. Important progress has been made towards the goal of eradicating poverty, but we need to do better. All developed countries should make timetables for reaching the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for international development assistance by the year 2015. Sweden will reach its one per cent target next year. Equally important is that all countries live up to the commitments on aid effectiveness, to our agreements from Monterrey and to our promises to find new ways of financing development.

Better progress in preventing maternal and child mortality is vital for reaching many of the MDGs. We must renew our commitment of universal access to reproductive health care by 2015 and give more focus to sexual and reproductive health care and rights. Market access for goods and services must be substantially improved for poor countries. Trade-distorting subsidies need to be phased out. Sweden will continue to work for reduced agricultural subsidies and to press for speedy implementation of the development dimension of the Doha work programme.

While the developed world can and should play a bigger part in order to reach the MDGs, the developing countries bear the critical responsibility for their own development. The importance for the sustainability of development efforts of good governance, well-

functioning democratic institutions and full respect for human rights and the rule of law cannot be underestimated.

The second challenge is to halt climate change. Awareness of the connection between the way we live our lives, particularly in the industrialized world, and its effects on the long-term survival of our planet is today greater than ever. But action is still much too limited. It is deeply regrettable that no firm agreement on the way forward was reached at the summit. All parties to the Kyoto Protocol and to the United Nations Climate Change Convention must continue to implement their commitments. There is also a need to urgently initiate a process aimed at controlling climate change beyond the year 2012.

The third challenge is to combat terrorism together. Terrorism has taken the lives of thousands of innocent people. One of our most urgent priorities must be to stop and prevent terrorism. It remains a threat to all of us. We need to address these threats together, with a broad strategy, and with respect for human rights. The outcome of the summit has given us a platform to build on. The United Nations should now take the lead in developing a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy based on the Secretary-General's excellent work. We must also conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The fourth challenge is to better promote human rights. Human rights are violated throughout the world, creating enormous suffering and affecting both security and development. Human rights must be mainstreamed in all United Nations work as a core task of the Organization. Sweden welcomes the decision to create a Human Rights Council. That Council will need a strong mandate to address any human rights situation, respond to urgent human rights violations and monitor compliance by all States with their human rights obligations. We must all join in efforts to establish an effective and legitimate Human Rights Council during the sixtieth session.

The summit made a strong commitment to our common responsibility to protect. We must now act accordingly. The world has a responsibility to react in order to prevent genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. The Security Council must be ready to take responsibility if and when a State cannot give its citizens the necessary protection. However, it is not just a question of acknowledging the obligation to act; it is also a question of being prepared to actually do so.

The fifth challenge is to implement commitments on disarmament and non-proliferation. Weapons of mass destruction could kill all of us here, all at once. They could wipe out villages, cities and entire populations in seconds. Yet we still do not take the threat seriously enough. It should have been made clear at the summit that disarmament commitments are to be implemented and that non-proliferation undertakings are to be complied with. The countries in possession of nuclear weapons have a special responsibility to disarm. At the summit, decisions should have been taken to strengthen verification. There should have been commitments to make the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and other arms conventions universal. Negotiation processes should have been given a boost by the summit. None of that actually happened.

Sweden looks forward to the recommendations of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, chaired by Mr. Hans Blix. The failure to address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction leaves us with an immensely important task ahead.

The sixth challenge is to put the Peacebuilding Commission in place promptly. Far too many people in war-torn countries have seen a fragile peace relapse into new conflict. With the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations is better equipped to build peace in war-torn societies and to prevent countries from relapsing into war. In order to be successful, the Commission needs to draw on lessons from international peace efforts. Regional organizations will have important contributions to make. The Peacebuilding Commission needs a well-balanced composition, including major donor countries. Let us establish this Commission before the end of the year. Sweden is ready to do its part, including through the swift provision of financial contributions.

The seventh challenge is to reform the Security Council and the Secretariat. United Nations reform will not be complete without Security Council reform. If the decisions of the Council are to be accepted as legitimate and effectively implemented, the Council needs to better represent the world of today. In addition, the Council's effectiveness must be

safeguarded. There should be no extension of the right of veto, and the use of the veto should be limited. The reform of the United Nations also requires the reform of the Secretariat. The summit took several important decisions on management reform. Those include a review of internal rules, regulations and mandates and the strengthening of the oversight system. But greater flexibility must be given to the Secretary-General in managing staff and resources. That would not only make the Secretariat more efficient, but it would also enable Member States to focus more on strategic issues and make the Organization more dynamic.

The summit has provided essential momentum for more effective multilateralism. The legacy of our efforts will continue to be determined during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. During the months ahead the task can be completed — the task to create a United Nations capable of facing the challenges of our time.

In conclusion, let me return to the subject with which I began: Darfur. The United Nations must, above all, serve the interests of the boy that I met there and of all the other children, as well as the husbands, the wives, the grandparents — men and women of this world who lack security, hope and human dignity. That is our mission.

The President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Nobutaka Machimura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Machimura (Japan): I should like, first and foremost, to convey, once again, my sincere sympathy in connection with the victims of the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. I would also like to pay high tribute to Mr. Jean Ping, your predecessor, for his distinguished leadership.

The 60-year history of the United Nations has been a pathway towards a peaceful, prosperous and just world. The path followed by Japan during that time has been, indeed, that of a nation striving for an honoured place among peace-loving nations. Building upon the determination that it will never again follow the path to war, Japan has pursued, and will continue to pursue, international peace and stability in partnership with the United Nations.

Japan needs an effective and efficient United Nations and strongly endorses the outcome document of the summit. To that end, our leaders' commitments, as expressed in the document, must be translated into action with the utmost urgency. Japan will spare no effort in that endeavour.

The new United Nations must be equipped with a better peacebuilding capacity. We expect the proposed Peacebuilding Commission to help to achieve that objective. To that end, Japan will continue to play a constructive role, making full use of its experience and resources.

In the Gaza Strip, the reconstruction effort after the Israeli withdrawal has been crucial. Japan has implemented more than $110 million worth of assistance since the beginning of this year, in the fervent hope that we will now see the resumption of the road map.

As the largest donor to the Trust Fund for Iraqi reconstruction, Japan has devoted its energies to bringing together the international community in the reconstruction effort. Humanitarian and reconstruction assistance by Japan's Self-Defence Forces and official development assistance (ODA) are contributing in tandem to progress towards a peaceful and prosperous Iraq. Japan has pledged ODA amounting to $5 billion, of which $1.5 billion in grant assistance has already been implemented.

Japan has taken the lead in assisting the Afghan efforts for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR), in conjunction with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). As a result, about 63,000 ex-combatants are to complete the reintegration programme by the end of next June. Japanese Self-Defence Forces vessels are engaged in activities in the Indian Ocean in support of the countries fighting against terrorism. Japan has announced that its contribution will total $1 billion by the end of March 2006, including assistance in the field of security.

It is essential to ensure a sense of justice in a society struggling to recover from its suffering in the aftermath of conflict. In the area of establishing the rule of law, Japan, in cooperation with the Government of Cambodia, has taken the lead in setting up a tribunal to try members of the Khmer Rouge, with a contribution of over $20 million.

Sixty summers have passed since Hiroshima and Nagasaki suffered the indescribable horrors of nuclear devastation. Japan again calls upon all Member States to renew their determination to bring about a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

To that end, Japan will submit a draft resolution to the General Assembly presenting a concrete agenda to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including a call for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). In that regard, it is extremely regrettable that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded without adopting a consensus document on substantive issues, and that the outcome document found no consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea's nuclear programmes pose a serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime, centring on the NPT, and constitute a direct threat to peace and stability in North-East Asia. Japan is committed to a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue through the six-party talks and strongly hopes that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will accept the prompt and verifiable dismantlement of all its nuclear weapons and nuclear programmes at the current round of talks in Beijing. Japan will continue to make every effort to ensure that the nuclear issue, along with the missile and abduction issues, is comprehensively resolved in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration.

Japan believes that the Iranian nuclear issue should be resolved through negotiations by diplomatic means. To that end, Japan strongly urges Iran to implement, in a spirit of sincerity, all the requirements set out in the relevant resolutions of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors, including the full suspension of uranium conversion activities, and to return to the negotiating table with the three European Union States.

In recent years, we have witnessed countless tragedies caused by terrorist acts. Japan, for its part, has continued to provide assistance to countries in need of capacity-building in the area of counter-terrorism. To consolidate the international legal framework, Japan calls on Member States to join international counter-terrorism conventions and protocols, including the newly adopted International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Development provides a foundation for peace and stability. The new United Nations must serve as an effective Organization for the promotion of development. Having recovered from the devastation of the Second World War with global assistance, Japan is in a better position than any other country to demonstrate the significance of ownership and partnership, poverty reduction through economic growth, and human security in promoting development.

The concept of human security — focusing on the protection and empowerment of individuals — offers a meaningful approach in a world striving for freedom and dignity. The concept also provides an important viewpoint with respect to the protection of human rights. I look forward to forthcoming discussions on this concept in the General Assembly, to which leaders committed themselves in the outcome document.

Based on its experiences as a recipient, and also a donor for more than a half century, Japan has been keen to make an impact on world development and thus has contributed one-fifth of world ODA over the past 10 years. Japan is resolved to continue its support for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To that end, Japan intends to increase its ODA volume by $10 billion over the next five years.

For the achievement of the MDGs, addressing the issues facing Africa is critically important. As Prime Minister Koizumi announced during the Asia-Africa summit, Japan will double its ODA to Africa in the next three years and host the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) meeting in 2008. In an effort to support Africans' own efforts to bring about peace and stability, Japan has devoted its energies to the consolidation of peace in such countries as the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia.

With respect to the Sudan, Japan has decided to disburse more than half of its pledged assistance of $100 million, with a contribution of personnel through the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). Furthermore, to address the humanitarian crisis in Africa and in other regions caused by infectious diseases, Japan has announced $500 million in financial assistance in the coming years for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Japan

will contribute $5 billion over the next five years to the "Health and Development" Initiative. Japan has also taken steps to address the "forgotten crises" in Africa and will continue to focus on those issues.

At no other time in its history has an effective, efficient and credible United Nations been more needed than today. The credibility of the United Nations is at stake. The basic structure of the Security Council continues to reflect the world of 1945. Reform of the Security Council therefore remains key to achieving the overall renewal of the United Nations. The fact that an overwhelming majority of Member States — 166 countries in all — called for Security Council reform during the previous session of the General Assembly is a testament to the urgent need for reform.

For the first time in the 60-year history of the United Nations, during the last General Assembly session we witnessed the submission of draft resolutions calling for fundamental change in the composition of the Security Council. Japan is proud to have taken the lead in promoting Security Council reform. It is encouraging, as well, that a large number of leaders at the recent summit expressed their support for reform.

I believe that Japan's path of striving for international peace speaks for itself, and should serve as the basis for a larger role for Japan as a permanent member of a reformed Security Council. I can assure you, Mr. President, that Japan will continue to make its utmost effort to realize the reform under your leadership. And I call on Member States to reach an early decision at this session of the General Assembly.

The new United Nations requires an efficient and effective Secretariat, with a strong sense of integrity. Japan is deeply concerned about recent developments, including the failure over the oil-for-food programme. The management and administration of the United Nations system must be transparent and accountable to Member States and their citizens. In this regard, Japan will promote and conduct more comprehensive performance evaluation of United Nations activities.

With respect to the anachronistic "enemy State" clauses, I am pleased to note that the leaders resolved in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) to delete these obsolete clauses from the Charter at the earliest opportunity.

A comprehensive review is also needed in order to reach agreement on a scale of assessment structure that is more equitable and fair. Japan will actively participate in the negotiations to be concluded by the end of next year. In the upcoming negotiation process, Japan will make its utmost effort to ensure that the status and responsibilities of a Member State are duly taken into account in the scale of assessments.

We have embarked on a mission to renew the United Nations. A great deal of work lies ahead. I call upon all representatives in this Hall to dedicate themselves to accomplishing this unfinished mission by the close of this commemorative session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 7.50 p.m.